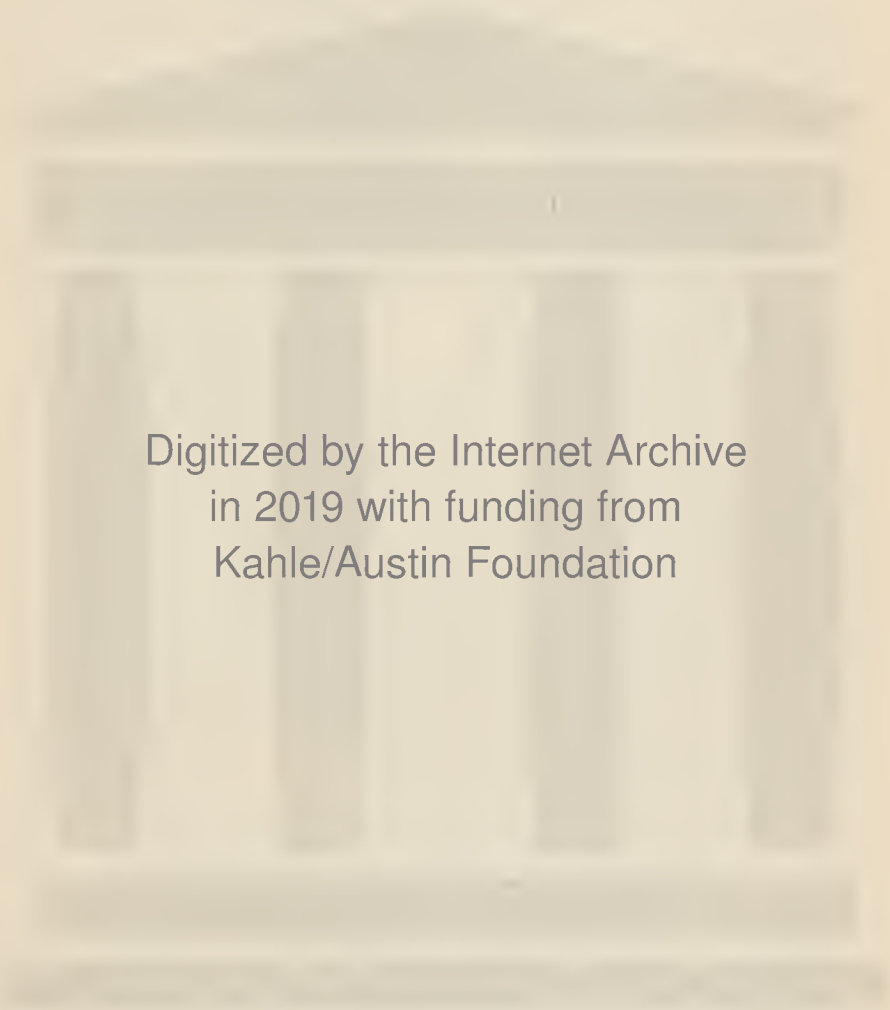
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A SELECTION FROM THE WRITINGS OF H. W. MASSINGHAM

Edited

with a Preface and Notes by

H. J. Massingham

with Introductory Essays by

J. L. Hammond, H. N. Brailsford,

H. M. Tomlinson, H. W. Nevinson,

Vaughan Nash and G. Bernard Shaw

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A BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

HENRY WILLIAM MASSINGHAM, the second son of Joseph Massingham, was born on May 25, 1860, at Old Catton, Norwich. His father was a prominent Radical and Methodist of Norwich, a local preacher, and one of the founders of the *Norfolk News*, from which enterprise the *Eastern Daily Press* was developed. H. W. Massingham was educated at Norwich Grammar School, under Dr. Jessopp, and received his early journalistic training in the office of the *Eastern Daily Press*, which he entered at the age of 17. Early in 1883 he came to London, succeeding 'Mark Rutherford' as London Letter-Writer for the *Eastern Daily Press*. He also contributed to the National Press Agency, and later became its Editor. In 1888 he became assistant editor and chief leader-writer of the *Star* when it was founded by T. P. O'Connor, whom he succeeded in the Editorship in July, 1890, resigning in January, 1891. For a short time, in 1891, he was Editor of the *Labour World*. About the beginning of 1892 he became literary editor, then assistant editor, and, on the resignation of Mr. A. E. Fletcher in 1895, Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. For some years he contributed to this newspaper a Parliamentary sketch entitled 'House and Lobby'. He resigned his Editorship of the *Daily Chronicle* in November, 1899, on the question of the Boer War. For a short time he was a member of the London Staff of the *Manchester Guardian*; then, in 1901, he succeeded Sir Henry Lucy as writer of the *Daily News* Parliamentary sketch, 'Pictures in Parliament', which he continued till he became Editor of the *Nation*. In 1905 he went to South Africa to inquire into the questions of Self-Government and of Chinese Labour; the results of these investigations were embodied in a series of articles in the *Daily News* in December of that year.

In March, 1907, H. W. M. became Editor of the *Nation*, (the remodelled *Speaker*, to which he had, since 1903, contributed a weekly 'Diary'). This position he held till April, 1923, when he resigned owing to the sale of the *Nation* to a group of 'Young Liberals'. The 'Diary', which since 1912 he had written in the *Nation*, he transferred to the *New Statesman*.

He joined the Labour Party in November, 1923, and worked for it until his death in August, 1924.

The bulk of H. W. M.'s work was contributed to the above-mentioned journals, with the late addition of the *Haagsche Post* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, for which he wrote for some time a weekly *London Letter*.

Other Publications: –

The Gweedore Hunt (an episode in the Irish Land War, reprinted from the *Star*). Fisher Unwin. 1889.

Humphrey's Orchard (a reprint of a *Daily Chronicle* article on an English eviction). Fisher Unwin. 1894.

(The above were pamphlets, and are now out of print.)

The London Daily Press (articles contributed to the *Leisure Hour*). R.T.S. 1892.

Labour and Protection (a symposium edited with an Introduction by H. W. M.). Fisher Unwin. 1903.

Introduction to Winston Churchill's *Liberalism and Social Reform*. Hodder & Stoughton. 1909.

Introduction to the Memorial Edition of 'Mark Rutherford's' Works. Fisher Unwin. 1923.

'Mark Rutherford' article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1924).

PREFACE

'He nothing common did nor mean
Upon this memorable scene'.

THE scope and method of this selection largely speak for themselves, and all I need do here is to take the reader quickly over the quarries. The book itself is divided into eight parts, and I expected the danger of the political sections robbing the rest. The great bulk of my father's writings were, of course, concerned with public affairs, and the other sections of the volume have a space allotted to them disproportionate to the total material available. Nevertheless, my arrangement is not so artificial as it sounds. When it is remembered that my father was in harness to journalism for forty years and that during all that time he was writing from one to three articles and sometimes more nearly every week, the extent of these quarries leaves nothing to the imagination. Yet this selection has been made out of less than one quarter of his complete writings, for the simple reason that three-quarters of them are horses attached to the plough. Year after year, they were taken over the fields of daily and weekly journalism and Time was the ploughman. These articles are ephemeral, because the face of 'Politics and Affairs' is unstable as water, and an event that aroused thunder and lightning five, ten, twenty years ago, now stirs hardly the faintest sigh or ripple of memory. No matter what the value, truth or influence of the criticism of the event, down they had both to go into limbo.

Thus, a writer whose daily service to humanity was indefatigable, is paid for it with forgetfulness. Naturally this fate has befallen the articles that deal with public life to a far heavier degree of mortality than could happen to those which escaped from it. So the problem of giving a fair field to all the channels of my father's expression has not really produced such inequalities of representation as might have been expected. The many-sided energies of 'H. W. M.'s' mental life are well represented here, because the true measure of a career devoted to the public service, and the cause of a fairer, freer and happier England cannot be represented at all. Had an editor of far

greater ability and critical discernment compiled this volume, he would not have made the best selection possible, because oblivion, the mere oblivion of soulless and accidental history, has exacted so heavy a death-duty. H. W. M. chiefly wrote about what appears in the newspapers, and newspapers live fast: a day old, and they are antiquities. Into this writing he infused a dynamic force and passion, a precision of language, an insight into the deeper movements of his time, a valiancy and power of vivid and unageing thought which on a different stage of life might have made good their claim for survival. Them, too, the hurrying stream has borne away.

But I am glad that, even at this cost, his thought, gifted with such ferment of spirit, should have flowed into so many different themes. H. W. M. had to overflow the banks cut out for him by his profession. Some said that he wrote literary and dramatic criticism and even impressions of places like a politician or at any rate a journalist off duty. The comment has truth in it in the sense that all his work was charged with a personality working at high pressure and burning with a very definite if complex and sometimes elusive attitude to contemporary life. His moods changed often and suddenly, though his lightning judgment frustrated them from leading him into a fixed wrongheadedness. But his general approach to any subject was extraordinarily solid and consistent; you could never say of him as of other men distinguished for their brilliance, that his lights were just coruscations. He was not guided by the subject but by what he thought and felt about it, and what he thought about one subject he thought about another. His beam moved in a wide radius and lit on many different things. But it came from one place, and that was a mind fixed in its own sphere.

Of course, he made many mistakes, as men of full and questing spirit must do, while his way of handling a theme, in a belief so unwavering, by a manner so abrupt, through a mentality so sharp, in a swoop so precipitate and yet so wonderfully skilled, did set a good many people by the ears. His dagger-thrusts hurt; he knew where to plant them, and a blazing zeal (not to say zest), a Covenanter's purpose though not his faith, put a sinewy force behind the blow. Yet I do

not think it would be true to say of him that he came to literature and the wider issues of life from the narrower campaigns of politics, with a mind set and steeled by conflict into grooves of predetermined thought. Such a view overlooks his amazing resilience and expansiveness of mind. It fails to take into account the fact that his political writings were invariably broader than their particular theme, and that a wide vision, a multiform intelligence and a beyond of passion for humanity (sometimes a bitter and a tortured passion) were crowding and squeezing themselves into – a leading article. It was well for a man possessed of so individual a force that he had made himself master of a peculiarly impersonal and objective style which kept his charging spirit close down to its theme. And he got that from his entire devotion to ideas, a devotion which made him a lonely man and detached him from those warm human relationships which all his gaiety and wit and elasticity and most telling personal charm could not bring back to him. His love was a star and dwelt apart.

Therefore, I think it would be truer to say that all these sections into which he has rather than I have divided the book, are the reflection not of a politican turned man of letters, nor of a dogmatist bending even beauty to his creed, nor of a practical journalist seeking the imponderables, nor of a crusader who regardeth but his Graal and that alone. His work is the expression of a single mind poured into divers moulds, each of which was a variation upon the pattern of an Original which was not shaped at all. And the metal discharged into them was always the same, a metal not readily to be analysed, a dramatic artist's metal, a soldier's and a leader's metal, and of other affinities besides. His was a composite mind, of varied substance and many glancing lights. Politics held it by no prescriptive right, but because action in the drama of life was essential to its nature. But, at the last, it eludes us, and by something more baffling than the fusion incomplete of all its parts. All we can know for certain is that in its chaste cold burnings it was great.

But I am the Prologue only and it is time for me to leave the stage to his colleagues, men of his stamp and generation. The selection I have made speaks, as I have said, well or ill

for itself, and further specific comment on the pieces chosen is reserved for the notes. I need say no more here but to warn the reader that I have picked what I considered the very best of writings remarkably uniform in quality not merely within limits inevitably out of proportion to his total output, but with a necessary regard for the general interest of the subject-matter.

A last word about the notes. I had intended retiring them into an appendix, where readers could take them or leave them as they chose. But a number of his private letters to one individual have been placed in my hands, and these strike me (and the giver) as being so valuable an index to his inward self that I have altered my plan. I have quoted numerous extracts from these letters, removed a number of my own comments, and placed the notes at the foot of each piece in the text. I can only hope that the reader will not, in consequence of this change, find the notes an intrusion. But if he does, I am convinced that the great and often poignant interest of the passages from the letters will prompt him to overlook and perhaps to forgive me. For these letters do uncover the fringe of that shrouded soul he reserved so jealously and adroitly from the gaze of all, however intent and sympathetic. They reveal a vexed, a restless, even a moody soul, one too not seldom dipped in the fiery furnace, but emerging to a reverent regard with a light about it caught from the skies.

I have to offer very special thanks to Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Nevinson, Mr. Hammond, Mr. Vaughan Nash and Mr. Brailsford for contributing the extremely valuable and illuminating essays herein printed. I also have to thank members of my family for helping to collect material for the book, and my father's secretary (Miss Cross) for compiling the Biographical Summary and informing me on various points. I am greatly obliged to Mr. Bonwick for allowing me to use the *Nation* writings, the Editors of the *Observer*, the *Spectator*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Contemporary Review*, the *Co-operative News*, the *New Statesman*, the *New Leader*, the *Sphere*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *M.A.P.*, and the *English Illustrated Magazine*, for permission to reprint certain matter

that appeared in their columns, and lastly to Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons for permission to reprint the essay 'Shaw and Swift' that appeared in the anthology edited by Mr. Ernest Rhys, *Modern English Essays*, 1870–1920.

H. J. MASSINGHAM

PART ONE: PUBLIC MEN

'H. W. M.'

BY

J. L. HAMMOND

'H. W. M.'

BY

J. L. HAMMOND

THERE is a sense in which it seems superfluous to try to interpret Massingham, for he spent his life in making himself known. For some forty years he wrote day by day and week by week, and if a writer's influence is measured by the fascination he casts even over minds that habitually reject his premises, his arguments, and his conclusions, Massingham was undoubtedly the most striking and attractive figure in his world. At the end of his life he said to a friend with a shadow of regret in his voice that he had given everything to journalism. It was true. Few men have had his talents to give, and few men who had them would have given them with so whole a heart. That he was the most brilliant and versatile of journalists; that he could bring colour into the dreariest scene in politics; that even when his mood was tired or dismal he could put life and force into fatigue and despair; that he possessed, whether he was producing a leader or a paragraph, the secret of a perfect ease and harmony that seemed to owe nothing to artifice; that his style scarcely ever flagged or stumbled; that his sense for structure, sequence, phrase, turn, and rhythm in writing was quick and sure: these are propositions that would be questioned by few who read his articles, by none who ever worked beside him. His less fortunate colleagues would admire and envy the variety and grace in which he could clothe the most unpromising and monotonous material with a few sudden touches of his sensitive pen.

Mr. Vaughan Nash once said of him to a friend that he was a dramatic critic who had turned to politics for his theatre. It was an apt description, and it gives the clue to his success and his deficiencies. Massingham's interest in politics was never political. It was the interest of a mind that liked to follow the play of character, the changes of taste, the progress of manners, the vagaries of reason, the conflicts of passion, whether

politics or religion or art or history or literature supplied the stage. This dramatic sense gave zest, vivacity, atmosphere, and movement to all his writing. He wrote incessantly, everywhere, for every audience, on every subject, but few men have written so little that was banal or halting or sententious. But this quality had its drawbacks. The acting on the stage of politics he was apt to find slow and lifeless: he demanded incident, crisis, brilliant scenes, great impersonations. Events were sometimes given a false perspective: characters a false importance. Massingham, who was more ready than most people to laugh at himself, joined in the general amusement that was provoked by his notorious faculty for finding and losing heroes. He looked back on a long sequence of infatuations with a kind of indulgent humour, but the habit was too strong for him, and he could not break it. When disenchantment came, he showed no sentimental tenderness to the fallen idol, and politicians learnt to pity the hero of one hour as the inevitable victim of the next.

For Massingham, in one sense so personal in his treatment of politics, was in another sense extremely impersonal. Some writers like to hold aloof from political society because they find some discomfort in blaming fiercely men whom they met yesterday and will meet to-morrow. Massingham was just as free and outspoken in criticizing public men with whom he was in constant touch as he was in criticizing public men whom he never saw, and that without the slightest effort. This was part of his temperament. It sometimes looked as if he stood to everything, including his life, his feelings, his friendships, in the same relation of detached observer and critic. For he was never intimate. Acquaintances who had met him once or twice thought he was an easy man to know; those who saw more of him realized that they would never know him. Superficially the most expansive and transparent of men, he guarded his life and his feelings as jealously as a hermit. He was like a very delightful and friendly French host who invites you with the most confiding manner into his front hall and never takes you farther. To no man was Bacon's phrase *particeps curarum* less applicable. Witty and charming in society, where he carried with him a certain subtle and deli-

cate distinction, he seemed deliberately to keep his life on the surface. He seemed to throw all the buoyancy and spirit he could into his outward relations in the hope that the world would never ask him for anything more intimate or revealing. For behind the front he showed to the world, laughing, bantering, welcoming, affectionate, like a man without a secret or a care, he nursed an impenetrable isolation.

Some of his friends think that he was happier as Editor of the *Chronicle* than as Editor of the *Nation*. In one sense this is probably true. He liked to write and print on the instant, and press day, which comes too soon for most editors, never came soon enough for his impatience. He enjoyed the sally of a friend who said that to give full scope to the vigour and rapidity of his mind and his mood he ought to edit at once a morning and an evening paper. A weekly review was too deliberate for his taste. Yet the *Nation*, which was his creation if ever any paper was made by a single mind, revealed the range and depth of his powers. He gave it everything; his rich and various interest in life, his serious culture, his artistic sense and taste, his wide knowledge of literature, his sparkling wit, and the most accomplished pen that ever used its pages. His judgment was too much the servant of his impressions, but he welcomed discussion, and his impulsive disposition disclosed unsuspected reserves of wisdom and caution as an argument developed. Very often he said little himself, and the debate would close without any definite conclusion, but its effect was apparent when his article appeared. For Massingham had a singularly honest mind, and he was open to conviction even when his prejudice was violently engaged. The untimely death of Richard Cross deprived him of the counsellor who was perhaps best able to bring a steadying influence on his rather tempestuous emotions. If his political judgment was uncertain, if his patience was not always equal to the wearing strain of events, which drag on their contrary course however sharply they are blamed, he possessed on the other hand in a remarkable degree the qualities that help to make a great editor. It was not merely that he was in the fullest sense of the words honourable, fearless, and sincere, and that his valiant love of justice never faltered. A man with high and

scrupulous standards, a critic careless of praise or scorn when once his course was clear, a writer who held that no theme was so trivial as to excuse the cheap or slipshod phrase, he was a journalist to make journalists think proudly and nobly of their craft. He possessed qualities still more uncommon. His candid nature was unclouded by any sense of self-importance; any desire for personal recognition; any trace of jealousy; any of the malignant moods that are apt to cast their petty shadows from time to time over generous minds. Gibbon's resounding praise of Fox will come into the memory of all who saw him in that difficult and vexing life behind the scenes which puts a man's character to the sternest test: 'No human being was ever more free from the taint of malevolence, vanity, or falsehood'.

J. L. HAMMOND

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MORLEY THE HUMANIST

MANY thousands of Englishmen must feel that with the passing of John Morley's noble, useful, and benignant career, something distinct and memorable in their national life came to an end also. Morley was the last of the great, the true, Liberals. With him there retired from the eye of history, and in effect, if not in name, from politics, the Liberalism that men knew as a definite thing, a scheme of thought different from Conservatism or Socialism, but with a meaning and principles of its own; a temper and habit of mind peculiar to the great thinkers and moralists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and a conception of government consonant with much peace and happiness for mankind. In another and a wider sense his death comes as a symbol and a reminder. Morley was a child and a star of European culture, and he lived to see the Europe that he had known as a home of co-operative thought and energy, peopled with kindred minds, sink to a scene of contention and decay. On the day which opened the history of this new Europe and decreed its ruin, Morley left politics for ever. He retired to his books and his friends, speaking little and with reserve about the War, but with a firm conviction of its irreparable power for mischief. The world had yielded him all that he asked of it; more, perhaps, than had been entirely good for him. But it had gone mad, and the place for an aged philosopher was by his own fireside.

The sun which has thus gone to a quiet setting enjoyed a long day, and men born into our age are unaware of its bright dawn and meridian splendour. Morley was an eminently charming and lovable man, and his experience of mere living in the joy of great friendship was wonderful. It was his fortune to win the love and spiritual heirship of John Mill; to count Hugo and Mazzini, and in lesser degree Taine and Rénan, as his friends; to have Gladstone as his master and Chamberlain as his pupil; and to receive such men as Spencer and Leslie Stephen, Arnold and Meredith, as intimates of his household of faith. And in himself he was a great power. It is hard for this generation to comprehend the devotional relationship which Morley established with the young man-

hood of the 'sixties and 'seventies. It reached all sorts and conditions of men, whose faith neither began nor ended with his own. 'In my life history,' writes a canon of the Anglican Church to me, 'Morley has meant so much that I cannot weigh him and his work in just balance. I owe him too much. His *Compromise* marked an epoch in my mental and moral development, and in many ways he seemed to me more Christian than the average Christian.' In the story of the release of young energies for the life of the soul no Fatherhood of the Church ever possessed a tenth portion of the explosive power of the great sceptics. And Morley was such a *pétroleur*. Observers of his age, catching him on the rebound, were apt to think him all caution and mental qualifications. That was a Morley, but not the Morley. The moral enthusiast in him did not die with the writing of *Compromise*. It lighted his long research into the emancipating and humanizing work of the eighteenth century. It constituted him, even more than Arnold, the apostle of culture, the exponent in the stronghold of Philistine England of the ennobling and softening mission of letters, and of the value of the philosophic mind. Above all, it made and left him a democrat. While many a *grand lutteur* in the battles of his youth – Taine, Rénan, Leslie Stephen – ended in disillusionment about the democratic process, or sank into downright misanthropy, Morley's finer insight enabled him to win through with his belief in the government of the people by itself substantially unshattered. He did not reach this end by rule-of-thumb processes, or by the barren logic of the *ergoteur*. His ground was instinctive and human. 'The claims of the multitude,' he says in his *Burke*, 'are sovereign and paramount just because it is the multitude.'

Still less was Morley's way that of the idealist-metaphysician. Just as he poured scornful or indignant rhetoric on Rousseau's passionate exaltations of soul and fatal instabilities of character, so, to the end of his days, he remained stone-cold to Rousseauism and its doctrine of 'inherent rights'.[1] In an imperfect world 'the criterion of general happiness', pursued through the modest formulæ of Liberalism, seemed good

[1] 'Would it not have been better for the world,' he said to a friend shortly before his death, 'if Rousseau had never been born?'

enough. Acton, in a passage which Morley quotes with no affectation of assent, says of him that his policy rested purely on the 'higher expediency', and that as for him there were no rights of God, so there could be none of man. Our great rationalist need not have quarrelled over the definition, for even in *Compromise* he advanced no higher claim. All he demanded was victory for the 'whole ultimate and completed expediency' over the 'narrow immediate and personal expediency'. Under the utilitarian banner, therefore, he marched to the end, always willing to barter for one Mill, or even one Voltaire, a college-full of Hegelians, new or old, taking roundabout ways to the devil.

Morley's intellectual life thus presents itself in a consistent, almost an unvarying pattern, through which ran the connecting strands of Rationalism, practical Utilitarianism, and reforming, pacifist Liberalism. From them he wove the finished piece, for they gave him all he asked for – respect for the individual, the submission of authority to human conscience and judgment, mercy and humanity in law, safety and a measure of content through the representative system, victory in the fight of culture against militarism, its enemy and the thief of all its treasure.

In tracing for Liberalism a broad track from Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, through the French Revolution and up to the humanities of Mill and Spencer, Morley did indeed prescribe the limits of its career. But he also yielded it a fairly wide field of speculative thought, together with an opportunity for enriching the lives of the commonalty, though not of changing their status. Then Socialism came in, and Morley drew the line at supporting an Eight Hours Bill for miners. Was his refusal necessary? For a moderate application of Socialism he had the later Mill to draw upon, and in his *Life of Cobden* he had summarized the case against the Manchester School in an epitome of Mill's argument in favour of a Nine Hours Bill. On the line of principle he had gone a little further. 'Unfettered individual competition,' he said, 'is not a principle to which the regulation of industry can be entrusted.' Was it not the business of the humanitarian thinker to open the road from Manchester Liberalism to the

social Liberalism of the 'nineties? Morley had a great opportunity. He possessed the ear of the capitalists and of the workmen, and the Nonconformists, divining the soul of the Puritan in much of his thought and writing, and won by his noble oratory, adored him. But there were faults of temper, joined to a real deficiency of social outlook. Laveleye thought that Morley did not know that the social question existed. Certainly on the occasions when he was moved to consider the condition of England, his gaze was a little vague and preoccupied. So, with the head prize of Liberalism in his grasp, he hesitated, and finally let it go in order to remain a Liberal *pur sang*. The gesture makes Morley's figure in history look more finished and statuesque than ever. But it lost him the Liberal leadership.

Was he original? It is as hard to be original when your mind is saturated, as his was, with knowledge of all the best things that have been thought and said as it is to be energetic when your study of the blunders of mankind has affected you with a sad lucidity of soul about the people who committed them. Undeniably Morley had the gift of discipleship. It is well for the world that some natures, possessed both of fineness and of strength, are drawn, as by a magnet, to the great and the lovable, for otherwise the history of religions, including the best religion of all, could never be written.

But when all is said of Morley's dependence on the mind of Mill and on Gladstone's masterful character, there remains to him a high place among the directing intelligences of our time. In speech and in writing he had told the Liberal politician where he came from and what he ought to do. As the only real Home Ruler among the members of Gladstone's first Home Rule Cabinet, his lieutenant in Ireland and his diplomatist – an extremely successful one – with the difficult Parnell, and his co-architect in the structure of the two Home Rule Bills, his work was secondary, but of an admirable finish and thoroughness. Morley's mind lacked fertility and quickness, but it was a model of order, and amid the minute detail of the Irish controversy it moved step by step with his chief's. Much the same comment may be made on his Indian Secretaryship. Morley owed a good deal of his scheme of reform to

Gokhale, a statesman if ever there was one. The elder Morley was cautious and a little prickly of temper, and his conversion was gradual. But once engaged in the great enterprise of opening the door to the new India, he never looked back. He was unfortunate in his Liberal critics in the House of Commons. They were a group of sincere but unhumorous idealists for Indian freedom, who came primed with extracts from *Compromise* and eager to launch them at the head of its illustrious author. Their relations would have been easier had Morley opened his heart a little wider than he did, and given them a hint of his incessant warfare with the people over the water whom he called 'the excited Corporal and the angry Planter.' The Planter and the Corporal were duly put in their place. But there was also Lord Minto. The Indian group did not know then that in the intervals of wagging an admonitory finger Morley was playing the part, well suited to the comic Muse, of 'finishing governess' to the Viceroy of India. From this delightful series of admonitions, reflections, and studies in elementary arts of English government Eton and Harrow may still learn something that their playing-fields have left unrevealed.

But only a fanatic would deny to the man of principle a certain play in political diplomacy. The charge of spiritual faithlessness rests on different ground. The world is a place of vulgar enchantment, and there are few or no Parsifals to escape from Klingsor's garden without a wound. And it may become a scene of mortal injury to a philosopher. Morley, coming late from the study, where ideas are made, into the political mart, where they are hanselled and spoiled, was peculiarly exposed to this trial. For all the vivid and powerful part he played in journalism and letters, and the grand scale of his friendships, his youth and earlier manhood were passed in voluntary, though by no means ascetic, exile from the conventional world. Was he warped by its flatteries, and did he take his later acceptance by it with a zest a little out of proportion to its worth? Many of his old admirers thought that he did. Certainly he compromised – a little. He liked praise and honour, and he got a good deal of them. He endorsed, if he did not approve, some acts of arbitrary power in India.

In the period of his editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette* he declined to come to the help of an obscure Secularist imprisoned for saying vulgar things about God. And then there was the Monarchy and the House of Lords. With the former Morley's relation was one of correct formality and no more. The latter offered, in a trying hour, a mariner's rest to a somewhat timeworn and weary pilot. But in matters of vital opinion Morley's life-record stands to confound the charge of pliability. It has not escaped notice that the *Recollections* contain an uncompromising re-statement of the Rationalist creed. They deal quite unsparingly with Mill's theory of a limited God, specially interested in Christianity. And they repel with firmness, almost with aversion, the revolt of Huxley's and Spencer's later years from the idea of personal extinction at death. There, as in the case of Mill's famous lapse into 'Manichæism', Morley upheld the Agnostic flag. As a Rationalist he had lived and thought; it was not for him to re-collect the shadows of a departed dream and fall in his closing years into a dim ghostland of speculative hopes and possibilities.

There was, indeed, one critical instance of apparent failure to live up to his idea of what a Liberal Government ought to be. In his *Life of Sir William Harcourt* Mr. Gardiner lays some stress on the part he played in barring Harcourt's road to the Premiership. It was, at least, a divided share. Most of the Liberals who were for Rosebery were thinking, not of Lord Rosebery's Imperialism, but of the social question and of the unwisdom of merely continuing the Gladstone tradition in economics. Not a Collectivist himself, Morley had gathered the younger, semi-Collectivist group, with Rosebery as its detached patron, under his wing, and had taken care that it should be fairly represented in the Cabinet of 1892. These men were not anxious for a Harcourt Premiership. And the Cabinet was in revolt. A prolonged fit of tantrums had made the good-hearted but tempestuous Harcourt unendurable. 'The fact was,' writes a wise member of the Cabinet of 1892 to me, 'a demon seems to have seized Harcourt. During the two years of Mr. Gladstone's last Administration, by his interference in matters in which he had no right to meddle, and by his bad temper, he succeeded in making himself hated by

his colleagues. . . . Strange to say, he completely changed his attitude in the short Rosebery Government. . . . He became conciliatory and good-tempered.' Of this band of sufferers Morley was a spokesman, to use his own phrase, 'of perfect candour'.[1] Candour must also admit that there was something more. Morley himself was in revolt against Kimberley's succession to the Foreign Office, concerning which he cherished an honourable hope for himself. It was defeated; yet who shall say that a half-blind, half-foreseeing instinct did not instruct him of an opportunity to write his name in letters of gold, and even to change the fate of Europe?

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In a final estimate of values Morley's achievement must rank high. He excelled in journalism and letters, in oratory and statecraft. His personality was a study of charm and grace; his life had real effectiveness. Yet who can fail to add a note of *dis*-qualification? He was an artist, self-conscious as artists are wont to be, and the attitude he liked best to see himself in was one of Promethean firmness. But things with him were rarely as simple as this. Morley was not always firm. A scholar and a thinker, he was no good hand at presenting Truth in the garb of partisan subterfuge and deceit. Scruple in speech is a fine quality, especially when one has command, as Morley had, of a plangent and decisive diction, and enjoys using it. But hesitancy in action is another matter. Noble minds have been infected by it; the true captain of men never. With one critical circumstance in his life, it explains why Morley, the best of the Liberals, their only orator, and after Gladstone the one man fitted to impart dignity and moral and intellectual worth to their creed, and to preserve its priceless tradition of morality in international life, failed of the Liberal succession.

For Morley, indeed, the only Liberalism for which he cared died on August 4, 1914. He had no use for any other. Imperialism seemed to him the brand of a fatal heresy, a corruption of the Liberal idea, as Constantine's *étatisme* was of the Christian one. Of the Asquith Cabinets he was little

[1] See *Recollections*, Vol. II, pp. 13–17.

more than a semi-detached member. He did not belong to the directing Imperialist group; and his concentration on India was a sign of withdrawal into minor eddies. The question of his and Lord Loreburn's full acquaintance with documents implicating us in the Franco-Russian alliance, and carrying with them a real, if not a formal, obligation to intervene in the Great War, is still in dispute. Of effective responsibility for the decision of 1914 he had none. Here and there he may have initialled what he had better not have initialled. But only a pedant or a journalist will seek in his career as a Minister for any true or serious deviation from his consistent pacifism. In that light his resignation was no episode. It was a crowning act of his philanthropic faith, the closing script of a long and glorious contention with the profound irrationality and moral madness of war.

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Morley was, as he said of Diderot, 'an honest and laborious craftsman,' and the perfect order of his library, and its fine selection, attested the great range and high quality of his knowledge and the exact method he applied to its arrangement in a well-stored mind. His manner was of a beautiful simplicity and courtliness, which he, who had known the great, chose to extend with much particularity to the young and the unnoticed. In conversation he was more penetrating than easy or quick; of irony, in its playful and serious use, he was a master. Where speech could express polite scepticism no further, the familiar gesture of the raised eyebrow was enough. Under the discourse of Mr. Bryan (the subject was British India), I have seen it lifted so high as almost to imperil the etiquette of the dinner-table. In his tastes and aversions he was a little fastidious, a little unsuspicious of insincere courtship, a little prone to be ruffled over trifles. He was no ascetic, but of a warm human temperament, with a rational human love of enjoyment, and his material surroundings were those of a modest and temperate ease.

His career in literature rises up in no single monument of classic space and grandeur. But it possesses a true unity of design, no less than a deep moral significance. It was an

illustration, as all literary work of the enduring type must be, of the principles which by study and personal association the author had made part of himself, and which gave meaning and a vivid purpose to his public life – the supremacy of reason, the supersession of force in political affairs by ideas of justice and right, and the final superiority of the representative method over the forms and devices of autocratic power. All through his life Morley was of the school of anti-Machiavel. With him, as with his admired Voltaire, 'reason and humanity were but a single word'. So when he was brought into late contact with Liberal Imperialism, he could only see in its 'new cant of efficiency' a throwback to the 'old cant of the good despot'. It was but a step from this position to the governing thought of his masterpieces in literary production. Morley aimed at ennobling the sceptical tradition, and exhibiting the gain to mankind in its release, at the hands of the great Rationalists, from bondage to formal, 'absolute' religion, with its issue in a corrupt morality and an unintelligible metaphysic. But with the humanities of the Christian faith he was so little at war that he may be claimed, with Tolstoy, as of the spirit of Jesus, if not of his visible household. 'Religion,' he said to the workmen of Newcastle in his first candidature there, 'has many dialects, many diverse complexions, but it has one true voice, the voice of human pity, of mercy, of patient justice, and to that voice your candidate has always done all he could to listen.' Morley joined another Christian attribute to that of pitifulness; in spite of some superficial attitudes, and one or two minor examples of moral compliance, he was an essentially unworldly man. To the society where mean advantages are taken, and coarse standards prevail, and the life of the soul is always in peril, John Morley never belonged; and his rejection of it, in his life and in the written and spoken word, makes the best inscription on his tomb:—

'And what is this smile of the world, to win which we are bidden to sacrifice our moral manhood; this frown of the world, whose terrors are more awful than the withering up of truth and the slow going out of light within the souls of us? Consider the triviality of life and conversation and purpose,

in the bulk of those whose approval is held out for our prize and the mark of our high calling. Measure, if you can, the empire over them of prejudice unadulterated by a single element of rationality, and weigh, if you can, the huge burden of custom, unrelieved by a single leavening particle of fresh thought. Ponder the share which selfishness and love of ease have in the vitality and the maintenance of the opinions that we are forbidden to dispute. Then how pitiful a thing seems the approval or disapproval of these creatures of the conventions of the hour, as one figures the merciless vastness of the universe of matter sweeping us headlong through viewless space; as one hears the wail of misery that is for ever ascending to the deaf gods; as one counts the little tale of the years that separate us from eternal silence. In the light of these things, a man should surely dare to live his small span of life with little heed of the common speech upon him or his life, only caring that his days may be full of reality, and his conversation of truth-speaking and wholeness.'[1]

From the 'Fortnightly Review' of November, 1923.

NOTE

This is perhaps the finest example of my father's power of concentrated political portraiture, fertilized by a nervously free but controlled expression, a balanced but lightning discrimination of the play of social forces and contemporary events, and a set of implicit moral convictions that never part company with the humanities. A richer tribute to Morley's quality and a more delicate criticism of his limitations could not have been paid him, nor could a just man have received a better justice to his memory.—H.J.M.

[1] From *Compromise*.

THE STATESMANSHIP OF 'C.B.'

READERS of Mr. J. A. Spender's *Life of Campbell-Bannerman*,[1] of all opinions and shades of opinion, owe him a debt of gratitude for the skill and knowledge that he has applied to it. The compliment is a high one, for Mr. Spender, while fully sympathetic with 'C.B.'s' character, and an approver 'on points' of his Leadership of the Liberal Party, could hardly be marked as a 'C.B.-ite'. Campbell-Bannerman was of the Left, while Mr. Spender was of the Left-Centre, and the effort of his journalism in the critical years of the Liberal schism was to maintain a delicate contact between the contending forces. His biography, therefore, has the proper objective quality. But while his hand is steady on the balance of judgment, his mind is so just in its appraisement of 'C.B.'s' merit that no kind of partisan quarrel can arise over his work. It is a tribute to the worth of his craftsmanship that the story tells itself, and that its drama is shaped to a complete and satisfying climax. Its ennobling quality lay in 'C.B.'s' devotion to ends that neither began nor ended with self. But there was also a play within the play, possessing a lively, bustling interest of its own. Events of great significance in the lives of nations have often turned on the issue of a battle-royal between an almost mythically attractive personality and a plain man of character. Of such was the struggle for the Liberal leadership between 'C.B.' and Lord Rosebery. It makes the secondary theme of Mr. Spender's biography, and it could hardly have been better told.

Mr. Spender's *Life* is not, on the whole, a book of revelations. He adds nothing to the still obscure story of the Jameson Raid, and, indeed, it is doubtful whether either 'C.B.' or Harcourt, the two Front Bench Liberals who sat on the Committee of Inquiry, acquired any important light upon it. To the tale of 'C.B.'s' famous refusal to go to the Lords he affixes a small but interesting sequel. The order from the Imperialist camp that 'C.B.' must quit the Commons and surrender the practical Leadership of the Government to Mr. Asquith was

[1] *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, G.C.B.*, by J. A. Spender. 2 Vols. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

conveyed by Sir Edward Grey, who came, says 'C.B.' in his rustic way, 'all buttoned up and never undoing one button'. Two years later, says Mr. Spender, Grey made the frank confession that he had been all wrong, and that 'C.B.'s' leadership in the Commons had been 'essential' to the management of the Party. One exciting contribution Mr. Spender does make to the history of his times, and that is his eagerly expected tale of the origins of our pre-War relationship with France. Grey gave the French diplomatic support, and promised them 'benevolent neutrality' in case of a German attack. But M. Cambon wanted more. He asked for a definite promise of 'armed assistance', and as an earnest of this the setting up of 'unofficial communications' between our Admiralty and War Office and the French Naval and Military Attachés. The astonishing thing is that the Cabinet of 1906 knew nothing officially about them or their accompaniments. The Committee of Imperial Defence was told, but though 'C.B.' offered Grey a Cabinet, the meeting seems to have been deferred owing to Lady Grey's death, and it is certain that it never took place. His story, therefore, is a half-told tale.

Mr. Spender's general picture of 'C.B.' is of a figure that has long been affectionately familiar. He had no great origins, and up to the later middle of his career, it might have been said of him that he gave no evidence of unusual power. He made a good Irish Secretary, and a rather better Secretary for War, of a type and a military faith that have passed out of fashion. His distinction at Pall Mall had been to elbow the Duke of Cambridge out of the post of Commander-in-Chief by a form of pressure so delicately applied that the Duke for ever after regarded 'C.B.' as his best friend. 1886 found him a late and not at first an ardent convert to Home Rule, applying a wary mind to its detail, and only gradually warming to a genuine conversion. All these things were of the routine of Liberal statesmanship, and 'C.B.' did them no better and no worse than thousands of Cardwells and Childers who had preceded him. But what happened to him then was altogether out of precedent. It chanced that the Liberal stage had cleared itself, as by magic, of most of its representative men. Gladstone was gone. Rosebery, with the sect of the Roseberians,

was locked in conflict with Morley and Harcourt. A leader from the middle, the disengaged, section, was therefore essential. By one consent both sides turned to Campbell-Bannerman. The gesture contained barely a touch of compliment. 'C.B.' looked a little like a caretaker, and some clever men made the serious mistake of taking him for one.

This error, and the emergence of the fine and rare quality which made 'C.B.' Prime Minister of England, constitute one of the most interesting chapters in our later political history. 'C.B.' may be called an ordinary man in the sense in which Lincoln was ordinary, in that his contact with men was made, not by way of the intellect, but by the gift of sympathy and instinctive understanding. It happened that in the crisis of the South African War the more trained kind of intelligence failed the Liberal Party. The Imperialist wing had given (as did 'C.B.') the usual patriotic support. But their ideas of the peace were either wrong or, as in Rosebery's case, inadequate. It required no vision of a prophet to see that when the nominal issue of the war, which was the annexation of the Boer Republics, had been decided, its real issue arose, which was the pacification of South Africa. Yet of all the Liberal leaders it was 'C.B.' who had the firmest grasp of the simple proposition that the Boers had to be lived with after the war – 'taken to our bosom', as he said – and that there was only one bond of union they would enter. This was a covenant of equality and self-government, conceived in a spirit of generosity and trust. He would look at nothing intermediate. From the moment of the withdrawal of the soldiers and of soldiers' law, he was for a straight passage to complete State liberty – no Crown Colony rule, no Lyttelton Constitution, no half-measures or timid blundering reserves. Mr. Spender says with truth that he alone saved the Cabinet of 1906 from a fatal policy of compromise on the South African Constitution, and brought it, by a brief but moving appeal, to a unanimous decision. He and Lord Kitchener (a kindred soul) were the two men in authority who, because they understood the kind of human being they were dealing with, understood also how the political problem had to be approached.

The same is true of his handling of the Liberal Party. As

'C.B.' saved South Africa for the Empire, so he saved the Liberal Party for Liberalism. In war politics tend to fusion. And the Liberalism of fifteen years ago was running, under Lord Rosebery and the Liberal Imperialists, into a colourless mixture of the prevailing Imperialist fashion. Again it was 'C.B.' and not the 'Intellectuals' who restored it to character and distinction. Mr. Spender thinks that his famous visit to Lord Rosebery in Berkeley Square (December 23, 1901) was an effort to 'heal the breach' between the two sections of the Liberal Party. It was much more in the nature of a bold raid into the enemy's country.[1] In this view it was a perfect success. 'C.B.' carried from Berkeley Square the knowledge that Rosebery would not rejoin the Liberal Party on any other terms than the abandonment of Home Rule and of the Newcastle Programme, the two guide-lines of its later activities. Rosebery, he wrote to Mr. Spender, 'won't rejoin, won't consult, won't do nuffin'.' In other words, he had given all the good cards into 'C.B.'s' hands. The acting leader proceeded to use them. His first step was to run up the Home Rule flag and bring back Morley and Harcourt to the Liberal councils. His second was to restore 'definite' Liberalism and put Morley's dilettantism in its place. His tactic was to preach Manchester School doctrine, seasoned with social reform. On these lines the union of 1905 was finally effected. Rosebery and his

[1] Mr. Spender gives a striking instance of what may be called the 'final utility value' of a political phrase. 'Methods of barbarism' as supplied by 'C.B.' to the policy of farm-burning and concentration camps in the South African War made the Liberal leader for years the best-hated man in England. But he never withdrew or apologized for it, and Mr. Spender, meeting General Botha after the war, thus describes the interpretation, which happened to be the right one, that South Africa affixed to it: –

'One day, eight years later, I found myself talking over these events with General Botha, who was visiting this country as first Prime Minister of the South African Union. Just as I was leaving he stopped me for a moment and said: "After all, three words made peace and union in South Africa: 'Methods of Barbarism.' " Softening the epigram a little, he went on to speak of the tremendous impression which had been made upon men fighting a losing battle with an apparently hopeless future by the fact that the leader of one of the great English parties had had the courage to say this thing, and to brave the obloquy which it brought upon him. So far from encouraging them to a hopeless resistance, it touched their hearts, and made them think seriously of the policy of reconciliation.'

League disappeared; and its vice-presidents became candidates for office. When 'C.B.' came to the rescue of Liberalism it was a hulk, drifting, captainless and rudderless, on the waters. Several years later, as its adored captain, he had anchored it to one of the greatest majorities in Parliamentary history. He achieved this task after half his lieutenants had taken service with an engaging pirate, and with not more than fifty men in the House of Commons on whom he could rely.

Campbell-Bannerman's handling of the Free Trade controversy ran on the positive lines of his attitude to the problem of liberty in South Africa and the problem of Liberalism in England. He declined the purely Conservative answer to Chamberlain. Mr. Spender shows how distasteful to some of his friends was his insistence on the social question, his posing of the riddle of the twelve millions of people 'on the margin'. There, again, he proved to be perfectly right. Chamberlain's lance had struck more than one weak point in the social organism, and it was 'C.B.'s' aim as a Liberal-Radical leader to accept what was true in these criticisms and to press them into the service of a policy of social reform. No other attitude was possible, or, with the Labour Party fast coming into its kingdom, would have given a year's life to the Ministry of 1906. And no other satisfied the idealism which made 'C.B.' different from the clever people who shared the Front Opposition Bench with him. Nearly all these gentlemen were better speakers than he, had more exact and copious vocabularies, and a neater finish to their minds. But they were by no means his equals in the sense of duty and in disinterested zeal for the public service. Thus it was that in the hour of his country's need 'C.B.' proved the most provident leader of them all. It was not a great orator like Bright, or a personality all fire and impetuous will like Gladstone, who schooled the Liberal Party to make its last grand gesture in politics. It was a man for whose inadequacies his colleagues were wont to make polite excuses, and for whom some of his best friends desired nothing better than a *fainéant* Premiership, modestly draped in a Peerage.

'C.B.'s' demeanour was a guide to his character. If every scrap of absurdity be drawn out of the phrase, and all its finer

implications left in, he might truthfully be described as a *bourgeois gentilhomme* – a simple, robust, and unusually brave figure, of the middle stamp of humanity. But the mark of dignity was there, too. Behind his good heart, his feeling for suffering, and his always tender approach to friends and true lovers, there was, as Mr. Spender says, 'something baffling', a kind of detachment, a touch of almost melancholy reserve. If, like the Abbé Coignard, he despised some men 'with tenderness', he cherished for others, notably for Mr. Balfour, a well-merited sense of injury, which he satisfied in good measure, when the debt became due; while his nicknames for his colleagues (Mr. Spender does not include his amusing if disrespectful title of 'Priscilla' for Lord Morley) showed how acute was his understanding of the little as well as the large game of politics. If a companion portrait of him be sought, it may be found in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* of the wary, silent Kutusov, who wore down Napoleon.

He had considerable culture in his way, was a good French scholar – witness the excellent phrasing of the 'Vive la Douma!' speech, which he wrote out with his own hand – and a reader of taste and discrimination. He was rather a lazy man, taking long bouts at Marienbad for his yearly portion, linked on to fairly long holidays at Belmont, and he was always ready, as he confessed, to 'bulge out' these vacations a little beyond their allotted span. But, once extended and in full action, he was both cool and indefatigable. His determination to be master in his Government was shown in his first appointment, which was that of Lord Loreburn to the Chancellorship; after that, and his decision, at Lady Campbell-Bannerman's instance, to retain the Leadership of the Commons, he had the Imperialists at his feet. But, save for the terrible affliction of his wife's illness, which for years kept the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister of England a night nurse at her bedside, his usual life and habit were of a comfortable, even tenor. Mr. Spender recalls some charming instances of the way in which his simplicity drew him to the company of children, and them to him. And his love of animals was one of the deepest feelings in his nature. He kept a home for his old horses, and would allow no shooting on his Scottish estate. There have

been great men in his position, who talked better, thought deeper, or made a more magical appearance on the stage. But none whom the common people more approved, and who better justified their faith.

From the 'Observer' of October 28, 1923.

NOTE

From a letter, written long after 'C.B's' death:—'Don't speak of courage and ideas in me – the courage of a mouse and the light of a farthing dip. But the Liberal Party seems to me something that can't be either cursed or blessed. . . . There's nothing really human about it as there is in Jingoism or Fisherism, or all the straightforward cults of Hell. I always want to tear it up and throw it on the dust bin; but I can't do that in the *Nation*, or my poor dear proprietors (whom I love) would have a fit, and so I shall have to do it elsewhere.'

Some of the quotations from the letters will not exactly be relished in some quarters and I have hesitated a good deal about including them. But the letters are H. W. M. as he really was, or as near as we can ever get to him, and I want in this book to give as true a picture of him and his outlook as I can. If he was not squeamish in his views or method of expressing them, neither am I going to be in presenting them. From one aspect, he was certainly a contentious, impatient, and a highly inflammable man; his methods were not always persuasive, and he based all his actions a trifle too flatly on Blake's proverb: 'Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you'. What his worst enemy could not doubt was that he was ever urged by other than altruistic motives.—H.J.M.

LORD SALISBURY

I

If Lady Gwendolen Cecil's life of Lord Salisbury[1] strikes us as one of the best biographies we have ever read, the impression is not a surprising one. For it has been given to few fathers to have such a daughter, and to few daughters to live in close communion with such a father's heart. It has been her fortune to take the impress of a powerful and original mind; to receive its confidences, and to share its most intimate travail; and all the while to train herself with rigour to the task of narrating and appraising a great public career. If there is not an unskilled or a faltering page in this book, it is because the writer has mastered contemporary politics, and, in following one of the most racy and virile of writers and speakers, has assimilated the strength of his style, and even acquired a portion of its humour. It is a poor compliment to say that Lady Gwendolen gives an adequate account of the battle for Electoral Reform and of Lord Salisbury's Eastern diplomacy. The truth is that Lord Salisbury himself could not have described them better. Lady Gwendolen has, indeed, seen things with her father's eyes. That is a filial attitude; but it is also a literary one. An aristocrat in heart describes the last stand of aristocracy in politics; and an acute intelligence has applied itself with complete sympathy to the intricate play of events which finally gave to Lord Salisbury the diplomatic succession to Bismarck. But the merit of this book lies not only in its control of facts, and in delicate response to its subject, but in its power of spiritual discernment. Essentially Lord Salisbury was of the line of the *penseurs*. He was not a constructive thinker, still less a cheerful one. But with him things enacted on the stage of politics referred themselves to a watchful governor within. His career, like that of all political men, covered examples of want of candour with the public. But of the lie in the soul he must be held guiltless. 'All unreality of thought or language,' says Lady Gwendolen, 'stirred him to impatient mockery.' If he found the life of affairs to be

[1] *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*. By Lady Gwendolen Cecil. Vols. I and II. 1830–1880. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

a rather pitiable business, he neither rhapsodized publicly about it nor framed an airy idealism for his innermost wear. There was God's goodness – and there was the world of men. The two could not be reconciled – at least by a Tory aristocrat, with a cool and probing intelligence. If that was a state of moral disharmony, it was one of intellectual truthfulness; and it is a surpassing merit of Lady Gwendolen's book that she affirms this spiritual unity and demonstrates it. Let us add a qualification of true artistry. Lord Salisbury's figure, for all its repellent power on the many who stood outside its circle, and some of the few who were within, was of singular charm. It is a great feat to suggest this charm, and to give the impression of it as something pungent and clean, like a scent of peat-smoke in a drawing-room, and to say so little about it.

And yet there is a criticism of Lord Salisbury's career which his daughter fails to meet, most of all when, by implication, she seeks to ward it off. Lord Salisbury, as we have seen, was the last of the aristocratic statesmen, – the last and the most virtuous of his kind. He lived hard always, earning his bread like a man when he was poor, and despising the softness of England – its high feeding and toadyism, its reek of club gossip and Taper and Tadpole pettiness – when he became rich and a great (and greatly bored) country magnate. He had pity for the poor,[1] but a more inveterate sceptic of the political worth of the people of England never lived. Lady Gwendolen makes a near approach to casuistry when she insists that in his great campaign against household suffrage, Lord Salisbury 'never opposed democracy on grounds of class privilege or of devotion to an oligarchic legitimacy'. Perhaps not; he only opposed it on grounds of property. During the Reform controversy, he suggested the analogy of plural voting in a Joint Stock Company as a suitable model for the suffrage of a State. He denied that Democracy supplied guarantees for Freedom or Progress, but when a man strikes the first and the last of these categories out of his dictionary, and takes the second

[1] He was a great builder of cottages (at economic rents) at Hatfield, and was a strong advocate of the Mansion House Fund started during the distress of 1888. 'What is the use of talking like that,' he said to the argument from 'political economy', 'when people are actually starving.'

for a yoke-fellow of property, he leaves himself little to fall back upon but 'oligarchical' pride. He assumed that the 'facts of human nature' were destructive of the 'ideals of what it ought to be'. These 'facts' grew out of a society where not one Englishman out of ten was given a chance of learning what England had been or could become, and only late in life, when he may have felt that such a country must expire of class-selfishness, did he acquire even the elements of a modern political philosophy. Nor was it in him to be truly and fully of his age, that is to say, to be a little in advance of it. For his intelligence would not let him. In a chapter of great psychological interest, Lady Gwendolen exposes the profound contradiction of his religious life. Lord Salisbury was a devout Christian, clinging to the Incarnation, and rarely missing its supporting rite of the weekly Communion. But the appeal to Christian ethics left him cold. He confessed that 'while he had never known what it was to doubt the truth of Christian doctrine, he had all his life found a difficulty in accepting the moral teaching of the Gospels'. He took Christianity as a mystery, arguing down most theological explanations of it. Its working in the soul of man, and its influence on his fate, seemed to him equally obscure. Did it appear in history, so that a man might say with confidence that such and such was a Divine end, and that he ought to co-operate with it? You could never be sure. On the other hand, anti-clerical France, attacking the Church as a danger to civilization, might well be in the right:—

'He quoted Professor Clifford's accusation against that religion that it had destroyed two civilizations and had only just failed in destroying a third – and he quoted it with agreement. What had been would be. The result was contained in the inherent nature of things, not to be affected by man's conscious action. We had been warned that Christianity could know no neutrality, and history had verified that warning. It was incapable of co-existing permanently with a civilization which it did not inspire, and any such as came into contact with it withered. How much more must this be so with one that had been formed under its auspices and had subsequently

rejected it! Such a society must inevitably perish. His voice and manner, as these reflections developed, grew heavily oppressed, and his eyes – looking out upon the sunlit sea beneath him – seemed to be filled with a vision of gloom as he dwelt with unforgettable emphasis upon the tragedy which would be involved in such a catastrophe.'

Thus the aristocratic man stood for an aristocratic religion, faintly apprehensible by the emotions and hardly at all by the reason, a thing to be kept apart and little meddled with, for fear it should act as a high explosive. No broad humanity could grow in such a soil. And Lord Salisbury's career, honourable and serviceable as it was, bore throughout his life the weight of this pessimistic thought.

The two volumes of this biography take the reader only to the close of Lord Beaconsfield's government, and therefore leave its subject a comparatively young man. His earlier years were his unhappiest. He was bullied at Eton, and told his sufferings in letters that we suppose breathed the sorrows of about one-quarter of the public-school boys of England. Oxford was better; but happiness seemed only to come to the shy and morbidly delicate youth with married companionship. To a character resembling his own, he made instant response, and blossomed into a native humour and playfulness. But he remained a solitary. Abhorring physical exercise, society, and soldiering (his father offered him a colonelcy in the Middlesex Militia, and the mere proposition gave him a 'stomach-ache'), the Lord Robert Cecil of the 'fifties and the 'sixties bound himself to a hard apprenticeship to politics and letters. He wrote for the *Saturday* and the *Quarterly Review*, though not, says Lady Gwendolen, for any daily paper. Thus if the country life of his time was something of a jungle, he at least enjoyed the freedom of the rogue elephant. With the average life of English political folk he could not have come in contact. He sat for years for Stamford, and never fought an election. And all through his membership of the House of Commons, he abstained from the Lobby and the political club; and made his conquest of its respect (though rarely of its vote) an almost exclusive exercise of the intellect.

II

Lord Birkenhead once summed up the distinction between his statesmanship and Disraeli's with the remark that the one was a 'static' Conservative and the other a 'dynamic' one. Save for the single episode of the Reform Bill of 1867, it is difficult to associate Disraeli's career with any political force continuous and consistent enough to be called 'dynamic'. Even that was an improvisation; a quick, brilliant insight into the Parliamentary tangle in which everybody but John Bright had lost his way. When, as the result of this stroke, Disraeli came to his own, he had little or nothing to say on the social question. The domestic policy of the Government of 1874 was all but colourless; events mastered it, and if its two leading men must be compared, Salisbury's competent realism stands out in solid contrast with Disraeli's ignorance of European affairs, and his flighty and self-conscious pose in policy.

It is here, I think, that Salisbury's true character and place among his contemporaries appear. He was a Realist, as opposed to Gladstone, the great Romantic. Totally devoid of enthusiasm, he threw a penetrating glance on the problems and personalities of his time and found both of them unpromising.

In his support of the Turks lies the brief story of his soul's defeat, but his method, in contrast with Gladstone's, both in temper and political aim, was purely intellectual.

He paid himself with a dazzling material success. There can be no reasonable doubt that Salisbury was the chief architect of the Treaty of Berlin. When the great transaction was over, he and Beaconsfield complimented each other on their respective shares in it. Salisbury had 'pulled the labouring oar', Beaconsfield's 'presence' had produced the needful dramatic effect. In a letter to his chief the new Foreign Secretary (March 21, 1878) rapidly sketched the cuts that he proposed in the Treaty of San Stefano. The two grand objects were to rescue Turkey from dependence on Russia, and to re-establish British power in the Near East. It was therefore necessary to drive back the proposed 'Slav State' to the Balkans, substituting a Greek province, to free the Straits, and to provide two

British naval stations, Cyprus and Lemnos (Lemnos was dropped), 'for the sake of moral effect'. Further 'moral' drapery was provided in the Anglo-Turkish Convention; and the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum, negotiated behind Gortchakoff's back, reduced the actual Congress to a *chose jugée*. The 'souls' had all been bartered away beforehand in the Dutch auction of Downing Street.

Here, in effect, Lady Gwendolen Cecil's record of her father's life comes to a pause, till she resumes it with the story of his leadership of British politics, subject to a compromise with Chamberlainite Radicalism. The closing passages have a certain moral interest. 'Dizzy' merely wanted a grand *feu d'artifice* to wind up his career. But Salisbury had a conscience; and his mind was a clear mirror of events. He must have recognized that when he consented to give back Constantinople and the Asian Christians to the Sultan, he was passing a sentence of death on millions of human beings. He laboured to avert it. 'Arguments, exhortations, warnings' went out to Abdul Hamid by every mail. He threatened partition. He tried to sow Asia Minor with British consuls and reconstructors. All was useless. The Turk changed not; but the storm in Europe took a new direction. Pan-Slavist Russia, foiled at Berlin, turned on Germany, and transferred her power to the new Western Alliance. The minor products of the Treaty were the Afghan War and the British dominance of Egypt. Salisbury played, as always, a prudent, moderating part; but either his master-stroke had tired him, or his originative powers, never great, failed before the demand now made upon them. If balance-of-power politics was to be resumed, the great task was to keep the peace between the Empires of Eastern and Central Europe. Bismarck twice commended to Beaconsfield and Salisbury an Anglo-Austro-German Alliance. They received the tender with approval but without warmth, and in the absence of a firm reply, it seems to have dropped out of the thought and memory of all the statesmen whom it vitally concerned. Salisbury, a great judge of national temperament though not of men, had at that period an equally low opinion of French power and statesmanship; and he felt 'pretty sure' that he could prevent France from joining Russia against

Germany. He prevented neither that nor the anti-British Germany of ten years later.[1]

Lady Gwendolen draws an attractive picture of the recluse and glutton for work, jealous for his privacy – he would dodge his secretaries from one room to another in the Foreign Office – and yet requiring of his staff a miraculous insight into his will. Not an 'ideal chief', his daughter confesses. Indeed, he was secretive and self-dependent to the point of freakishness. But his letters to his ambassadors and agents revealed a master of the arts of exposition and suggestion. His common-sense intellectualism expressed itself with rare clarity and grace; or ran, in easy relief of its argument, to ironic humour. Scorn of sentimental self-delusion was its favourite theme, with variations on the pedantry of officials, the blunders of soldiers, the vanity of the politician, or his habitual funk of facts. What was 'moral influence'? 'A combination of nonsense, objurgation, and worry.' He thought as little of experts as Mr. Bernard Shaw. 'No lesson seems to be so deeply inculcated by the experience of life as that you never should trust experts. If you believe the doctors, nothing is wholesome; if you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent. If you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe.' Yet he himself was a hierophant, allowing no rights to the public in the practice of his dangerous cult. Concealing the cynical balance of his dual bargain with Turkey and Russia, he treated Sir Stafford Northcote to a mocking (and correct) forecast of the English and European row destined to follow its disclosure.

It is remarkable that a policy so haughtily veiled from men's eyes, and so unsympathetic to their dreams of what international life ought to be, should yet retain not only the snob's admiration, but the respect of the average thoughtful man. It failed, and did great harm to England. But it was bold – Bismarck's sneering sketch of the lath painted to look like iron fades away before Lady Gwendolen's portrait of the virile Salisbury of 1878 – and it was pessimistically sincere. Whatever men may say, they reserve their heart's contempt for the pedant and the hypocrite; their easy forgiveness for the man

[1] He said cynically of these events: 'On the sound rule that you love those most whom you compete with least, Germany is clearly cut out to be our ally'.

who refuses to deceive himself, and yet in the dim air of a difficult world acts according to the light that is in him. Lord Salisbury, indeed, went a step further than mental frankness about his work; his mystical fatalism allowed him to treat its issues as above and beyond him. When some guests at Hatfield condoled with him on the fearful burden of responsibility under which they conceived him to be labouring, he said, after their departure, to his family, 'They would have been terribly shocked if I had told them the truth – which was that I didn't understand what they were talking about':—

' "I should understand [he added] if they spoke of the burden of decision – I feel it now, trying to make up my mind whether or no to take a greatcoat with me. I feel it exactly the same way, but no more, when I am writing a dispatch upon which peace or war may depend. Its degree depends upon the materials for decision that are available, and not in the least upon the magnitude of the results which may follow." Then, after a moment's pause, and in a lower tone, he added, "With the results I have nothing to do". '

'Results' may be only half-calculable things. But in his Eastern diplomacy Lord Salisbury did not sow their seeds in ignorance. The immediate fashion of his work was soon destined to wither and pass away. But not before the upas-tree he dug round and watered afresh had borne a last deadly fruitage.

From the 'Nation' of November 19 *and* 26, 1921.

NOTE

In this article I have departed from my otherwise invariable practice of eliminating nothing from the pieces I have chosen except topical references. I have taken out between two and three pages dealing with Lord Salisbury's desertion of the peace policy in his negotiations with Turkey and Russia after the Treaty of San Stefano. They are concerned less with Lord Salisbury's career than with a superseded and technically intricate phase of European politics, while the broader results of England's part in them are adumbrated in the closing pages

of the article. Even so, I have cut these pages away reluctantly, and only because so many other pages are waiting at the door, with invincible claims for admission.

I think it will be admitted that my father was a master of political biography. But, his busy life being what it was, it can hardly be regretted that he failed to write a 'Life', since many portraits are the result, instead of few or one, and each of them, for sureness of insight in relating his subject both to his age and the larger issues of humanity, a book in itself.—H.J.M.

THE MOBLED QUEEN

I

It is impossible to read Mr. Strachey's *Queen Victoria*[1] without feeling that, for our generation at least, the Victorian age, for all its nearness of time, has almost completely disappeared from view. To the true Georgian it is not merely remote, it is incredible. Its statesmen are not statesmen, nor its poets poets; and the faces of its men and women seem hardly more real than figures on a sampler, or a drawing-room 'set' at Madame Tussaud's. If this is true of the age, it is equally true of the Queen. Within twenty years of her death, the robust and characteristic figure of Victoria has faded to the colourlessness of Anne. Mr. Strachey has, literally, to re-create her; and if the result is a historical study of less than traditional seriousness, one may blame a little the author's abundant gift of the Comic Spirit, but still more the extraordinary difference between his age and hers. Observing the latter through his Gulliver's glass, Mr. Strachey is unable to keep a straight face. He can only regard it *sub specie absurditatis*. If such people could be regarded as ever existing, it must have been on a floating island, or in a country where horses ruled men.

And if the age in which we live has changed in spiritual texture from that on which Victoria bestowed her simple affections, it is so altered politically that if her ghost could revisit it for an hour, it would shriek and fly away again. Everything is gone. Nominally her grandson's throne is the only great Monarchy left in Europe. In reality, and in Mr. Lloyd George's hands, England became almost a plebiscitary Republic. It was coming to that before she died, much to her discomfort. For the Queen never possessed more than a tincture even of her moderately progressive times. She was a George III who knew when to stop, and had fundamental roots of common sense and good feeling unknown to the two 'nasty old men' who preceded her. But in policy there never was a real link between the Queen and the nation. Public opinion in the England of her early reign was pro-Dane and pro-Italian; the Queen was pro-Austrian and pro-Prussian. The

[1] *Queen Victoria.* By Lytton Strachey. (Chatto and Windus.)

nature and balance of the Constitution were laid down in 1688. The Queen cared nothing for it. She and the Stockmar-Leopold-Coburg combination wanted the Monarch to preside over the Cabinet Councils and to control foreign affairs, as the Kaiser controlled them in 1914, over the heads both of Parliament and the Foreign Minister. It happened that when the nation was Jingo she was the greatest Jingo in it. But that was a coincidence. The Queen remained a high Tory when England was Liberal; a European Imperialist when it was revolutionary or nationalist. Her people called General Haynau 'General Hyæna', and tried to mob him in the streets of London; she bitterly resented the insult to a 'distinguished soldier'. She supported only those Ministers she liked; and when Prince Albert died, that able 'German Prince'[1] stood with her on the steps of an English absolutism. Most of her personal predilections in politics were for the ogres of Liberalism. The slippery Napoleon fascinated her; she was awestruck at the cruel Nicholas and thought him the greatest potentate on earth. At home her favourites were men of the Right or of reaction. She hated Gladstone and cared little for Peel; adored Melbourne and Beaconsfield; refused Bright a Privy Councillorship, and forbade the offer of Cabinet rank to Cobden. She wanted a second war with Russia, and threatened to abdicate if Disraeli denied it her. She gloried in the Austrian victory at Novara, and spoke of it as if it were a second Waterloo. Europe to her was a few thrones and thronelets, mainly German. In the mid-nineteenth century she would have restored the Duchies of Tuscany and Modena, and banished Victor Emanuel to Sardinia – or Sardis. She was not merely undemocratic, she hated the very idea of democracy. Ministers were her Ministers, not the people's; to the end of her life she regarded the Army and its officers as the Varangian Guard of the House of Hanover.

II

Uncle Leopold and Stockmar had fixed the Queen's political ideas for her, and her temperament was naturally and deeply conservative. But it was susceptible. She was a woman, and it

[1] Disraeli.

fell to her lot to come under the sway of three powerful men. The first, Lord Melbourne, a cynic and a charmer, gave to her the last of his romantic emotions and the *débris* of his kind, perverse, and unfruitful intellect. Mr. Strachey describes this early and thrilling episode in the Queen's life in the most delicately painted portrait of his book:—

'Cherished by the favour of a sovereign and warmed by the adoration of a girl, the autumn rose, in those autumn months of 1839, came to a wondrous blooming. The petals expanded, beautifully, for the last time. For the last time in this unlooked-for, this incongruous, this almost incredible intercourse, the old epicure tasted the exquisiteness of romance. To watch, to teach, to restrain, to encourage the royal young creature beside him – that was much; to feel with such a constant intimacy the impact of her quick affection, her radiant vitality – that was more; most of all, perhaps, was it good to linger vaguely in humorous contemplation, in idle apostrophe, to talk disconnectedly, to make a little joke about an apple or a furbelow, to dream. The springs of his sensibility, hidden deep within him, were overflowing. Often, as he bent over her hand and kissed it, he found himself in tears.'

The seductive Melbourne did his devastating work. He was delightful, but he was dangerous. He broadened the young Queen's mind, fed her pride, and intoxicated her fancy. But he was too idle, and too much of a Whig, to train her for what would have been her task had not England been England, and its Constitution a limited Monarchy. That business was reserved for Albert, the pupil of Stockmar, and an undeniable prig, one of the ablest and best of his kind. Mr. Strachey, in a long, ironical, and admiring portraiture of this remarkable man, laments that the Queen's adoration turned him into a piece of 'impeccable waxwork', and thereby made it impossible for the average Englishman to do anything but loathe him. But the real trouble was that Albert was a German, and that he found dancing, fox-hunting, pleasure-mad England at once too dull and too frivolous. So he set to work to govern it and its Queen, and to turn the latter into the model of what he and

Stockmar conceived that an All-Highest Sovereign ought to be. For a time all went well. The Royal pair, setting to work at adjacent writing-tables, did powerful team-work. Victoria had her queenhood, her affectionate, imitative will, her vital and passionate temperament; Albert, his intellect and his gift for writing memoranda in the German manner. Between them they turned out Palmerston, and secured that the foreign dispatches should be submitted to the Queen, and should go out in the form in which she approved them. But nothing happened. The country merely got angry, and Palmerston soon came back again. In the meantime Russell went on supporting Italy instead of Austria. Albert's wishes for the good of the world and the restraint of the British Constitution were never forgotten, and Palmerston used to say that he found the dead Prince Consort more difficult to deal with than the living one. But the fate of England was to burn Prussianism, not to adore it. When the Prince died of typhoid, complicated with overwork, with some heart-sorrow and disappointment, and a little, may be, with a visit to Cambridge, where the young Prince of Wales's conduct, says Mr. Strachey, called for a 'parental admonition', he left his memory to an unforgetting lover. His policy lay buried in his grave.

III

There came, indeed, an Indian summer for the Queen, a brief and unreal hour of exhilaration. In the Liberal period she almost disappeared. In such a world there was nothing for her to do but to fight Liberal measures and see them pass into law. Lonely and unpopular, and living in the past, a place was reserved for her in the last of Disraeli's works of imaginative fiction. Mr. Buckle's concluding volume [1] has given a sufficiently frank picture of how the Oriental adventurer found his way to her heart. Flattery was the weapon with which he habitually marched to battle with the sex. He was a charlatan, and the Queen's intelligence, reliable in the simpler matters of the soul, lay open to what Mr. Strachey calls the 'rococo allurement'. The last romance was the least beautiful, though

[1] *Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield.* By G. E. Buckle. Vol. VI. (Murray.)

Dizzy rose to it as the singer to his swan-song, the artist to the supreme, the intoxicating, draft on his imagination:—

'He realized everything – the interacting complexities of circumstance and character, the pride of place mingled so inextricably with personal arrogance, the superabundant emotionalism, the ingenuousness of outlook, the solid, the laborious respectability, shot through so incongruously by temperamental cravings for the coloured and the strange, the singular intellectual limitations, and the mysteriously essential female element impregnating every part of the whole. A smile hovered over his impassive features, and he dubbed Victoria "the Faery".'

The Beaconsfield hallucination did not work well for England. Through her adoring friendships the Queen kept the imprint of her primitive self, and when, in the Russian episode, the supple Jew thought to turn her back to prudence and moderation, the flattered woman broke bounds, and outran and defied his counsels. Her Grand Vizier's rollicking fancy figured the dumpy little Queen as a kind of she Haroun-al-Raschid. But it was her native self that finally reconciled her to her people. Albert was beyond them. The Queen could fill the land with his statues and plaster Balmoral with tartans, including the 'Balmoral tartan', 'designed by the Prince', and the 'Victorian tartan, with a white stripe, designed by the Queen'. They thought it peculiar. When he died, she erected her pompous Memorial, and they thought it beautiful, but queer. She fought Palmerston, and they made that eminent Copper Captain into a patron saint of England. She deified Beaconsfield, and at the first General Election they threw him out of power. But when her woman's heart, the fresh and spontaneous part of her, carried homespun comfort to the bereaved of the blazing mine and the foundered ship, it opened to her a path to the affections of the British folk that closed only with her death.[1] With one or two exceptions – such as the

[1] The Queen had three periods of great unpopularity: the first due to her treatment of Lady Flora Hastings; the second to the country's dislike of Prince Albert; and the third to her prolonged and penurious widowhood.

intervention for American and later on for European peace – Victoria's political career was a blunder. It could never have succeeded; had it done so, it would have been a crime. She had no head for politics; the very reverse of Elizabeth, she loved and hated like a woman, not like a ruler of States with a mind fixed on public expediency. But this was rightly judged to be accidental. She had advisers, and in the end they governed England. But there was a sense in which she lived for it. In her soul, the Queen did not belong to Leopold, or Stockmar, or the muddled ambitions which tempted her woman's pride, or lured her unsophisticated intelligence. She belonged to a country which was neither of the Court, nor the upper ten, nor even her beloved middle-class; but a breed of men and women as simple as herself, whom she loved and sympathized with, and to whom, in her and their hour of grief or joy, she talked in language they could understand.

It is of this simple humanity of the Queen that, while intellectually aware of it, Mr. Strachey, in his witty judgment of her eccentricities,[1] fails to take due account. He is a master of colour rather than of spiritual analysis; he is a little the slave of his aristocratic humour, and so it happens that through the carefully laid net of his irony, the humble essence of the Queen's nature sometimes escapes him. Victorianism *was* absurd; as absurd, maybe, as Mr. Strachey's brilliant summary of the events which, in the memory of the dying Queen, may have seemed most to reflect its homeliness:—

'Perhaps her fading mind called up once more the shadows of the past to float before it, and retraced, for the last time, the vanished visions of that long history – passing back, through the cloud of years, to older and ever older memories – to the spring woods at Osborne, so full of primroses for Lord

[1] This is Mr. Strachey's somewhat disrespectful description of the Queen's relationship with John Brown:

'She came to believe at last – or so it appeared – that the spirit of Albert was nearer when Brown was near. Often, when seeking inspiration over some complicated question of political or domestic import, she would gaze with deep concentration at her late husband's bust. But it was also noticed that sometimes in such moments of doubt and hesitation her Majesty's looks would fix themselves upon John Brown.'

Beaconsfield – to Palmerston's queer clothes and high demeanour, and Albert's first stag at Balmoral, and Albert in his blue and silver uniform, and the Baron coming in through a doorway, and Lord M. dreaming at Windsor with the rooks cawing in the elm trees, and the Archbishop of Canterbury on his knees in the dawn, and the old King's turkey-cock ejaculations, and Uncle Leopold's soft voice at Claremont, and Lehzen with the globes, and her mother's feathers sweeping down towards her, and a great, old repeater-watch of her father's in its tortoise-shell case, and a yellow rug, and some friendly flounces of sprigged muslin, and the trees and the grass at Kensington.'

Absurd, but human. Not a great deal of the 'Faery', but something of the common grain and universal dust.

From the 'Nation' of April 16, 1921.

NOTE

It strikes me as illuminating that of two intellectuals, the biographer of the Queen should have missed the 'humble essence of her nature', while the commentator was the one who pointed out that he did. And it is a vain attempt to get the true measure of H. W. M. without realizing that for all his idealism, his journalism and lifelong immersion within the world of politics and affairs, his necessary adhesion to club-life, his loneliness and apartness as a human being, his work never did lose sight of the purely human valuations.—H.J.M.

THE POWER OF JOHN BRIGHT

'I HAVE often compared, in my own mind, the people of England with the people of ancient Egypt, and the Foreign Office of this country with the temples of the Egyptians. We are told by those who pass up and down the Nile that on its banks are grand temples with stately statues and massive and lofty columns, statues each one of which would have appeared almost to have exhausted a quarry in its production. You have, further, vast chambers and gloomy passages; and some innermost recess, some holy of holies, in which, when you arrive at it, you find some loathsome reptile which a nation revered and reverenced, and bowed itself down to worship. In our Foreign Office we have no massive columns; we have no statues; but we have a mystery as profound, and in the innermost recesses of it we find some miserable intrigue, in defence of which your fleets are traversing every ocean, your armies are perishing in every clime, and the precious blood of our country's children is squandered as though it had no price.'

It is a common and a false criticism of John Bright's career that it stood for dying or even lost causes in politics rather than for its living forces. John Bright is no more out of date than Isaiah, and for much the same reason; but many students of Mr. Trevelyan's *Life*,[1] admirable alike for its skill and its reserve, will rise from it with a firm conviction that but for John Bright there would have been no Liberal Party, and not much of modern England. It is unnecessary to contend that Bright was a man of first-rate genius for affairs. Gladstone was that, and Lincoln, and many inferior persons. Bright was something finer and rarer. To Gladstone, the engineer of modern Liberalism, he was the power of conscience and suggestion; to his party, he was the power of ideas; to his countrymen, at more than one crisis in their history, he was 'the power of God unto salvation'. Had the Crimean War been followed by a French and an American War, there could have been no rise in the standard of physical life for the people, and no peaceful enfranchisement of the workmen. The first crime was averted

[1] *The Life of John Bright.* By G. M. Trevelyan.

more by Cobden's and Gladstone's efforts than by Bright's; the second was rather his work than Cobden's, as a perusal of his letters to Sumner, read out at the meetings of Lincoln's Cabinet, suffices to show.

But Bright's essential political service was the destruction of what he called the 'infatuated and imbecile party' of the Whigs, and the substitution for it of modern Liberalism. Of that structure he was at once designer and builder. The moment the Free Trade controversy was decided he turned to political reform. Cobden for once was not with him, for Cobden's fancy was for land reform, and, strangely enough, for packing the constituencies with fifty-shilling freeholders selected from the Anti-Corn Law League. Mildly rebuking his friend for his 'disbelief in political measures', Bright sketched in bold outline the measures of 1867 and 1885, restoring the ranks of the workmen broken by the failures of the Chartists, and raising the banner of pure democracy, never to be lowered again. As work for the new combination of middle-class men and manual workers, the counterpoise and conqueror of the aristocracy he hated and the Church he despised, he furnished it with policies enough to last it through the second half of the Victorian age. He tried some paths – such as the repeal of the game laws – and was baffled. He threw out some fruitful notions, such as 'decentralization' for Indian Government, and the creation of Presidencies in place of an Empire, to which a later generation of Liberal statesmen were to give shape. He twice foreshadowed, in half a dozen sentences, the form of the Parliament Act. He gave Gladstone his two guide-lines to Irish Reform – the universal establishment of tenant right as the preliminary to the eviction of the landlords on terms that the State could bear, and the disestablishment of what he called Ireland's 'one Church too much'. Disraeli, by far the keenest contemporary observer of politics, saw that here resided at once the great formative and the great expulsive genius of his time, and would fain have made friends with him. But Disraeli could not walk straight, and Bright never walked in any other way. He never once deviated from the ground-plan of all his greatest public work, which was the creation of political democracy. 'The nation in every country dwells in

the cottage', 'the rich find everything just as they like. . . . If a class has failed, let us try the nation'; trust to 'numbers', not to intellect, least of all to the scholarly intellect – these were his themes. His proud and noble oratory, scornful of statesmen, priests, peers, even of Parliament, fired the people with fresh courage; his bold interventions in the fate of Governments and statesmen, his constant arraignment of them on grounds of morals, not of expediency, made them think of him as their representative man, his resolve to wreck parties, unless they adhered to principles ('I speak not the language of party; I feel myself above the level of party'), made, in effect, a new party, which was the unenfranchised millions. When that body had been marshalled, Bright's work was done. He was ignorant of some questions, wrong on others, notably on the relations of the State to industrial labour. But he was rarely wrong in direction. He saw whither the nation must go to win its freedom; and he had a voice to point the way, and to cheer the pilgrims along it.

The secret of Bright's influence with the great mass of his countrymen, whom he aroused to claim their share in the ruling of their land, was his gift of simple and direct speech. No greater power resides in man, when, as in Bright, it is governed by reason, and animated by passion, faith, and moral force. But Bright's grand merit as a public man was to regard statesmanship, not as a mere executive function, but as a means of guiding and stimulating the better mind and judgment of the nation. For the greater part of his days, and during the whole period of his creative activities, he stood outside the official world of Britain, sharing neither its illusions nor its rewards. His conception of duty, which he held with Cobden, seems, save for a handful of Socialist agitators and thinkers, to have utterly passed out of our public life. There is at this moment no one in youth or in the middle term of his years to stand between the living and the dead, to test Ministries by principles of public conduct, and to maintain a body of doctrine by which they shall be made to stand or fall. There was nothing really commonplace in Bright's intelligence, but his use of it for the free criticism of public men and policies was an original and deeply salutary social office. His eye was stern and penetrat-

ing; his judgment firm to harshness. He has been called an optimist, but he disdained many of the ordinary views and tests of progress. He scoffed at a diplomacy which set up that 'foul idol' 'the balance of power', and tricked it out to cover 'a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy'. 'Religious feeling,' says Mr. Tevelyan, 'in its simplest form, was the very basis of his life.' But he loathed religiosity, and measuring the life of his times by his own stern idealism and simple faith, hardly thought the nation in Christian hands. 'The working people of this country do not care any more for the dogmas of Christianity than the upper classes care for the practice of that religion.' 'It is not Bradlaugh's atheism which they hate, but his unconscious Christianity.' A conservative in essential relationships, he could not allow the past to fetter him. 'We are true ancients,' he said, 'we stand on the shoulders of our forefathers, and see further.' Until the people and Parliament had control of foreign affairs, he declined to flatter them with the legend of their power in the State.

All these things, be it remembered, he thought and said with his hand on the engines of power, courted and feared by statesmen, but neither making nor breaking them for any end that could be called a personal one. 'Bright reigns but does not govern,' said the hostile *Saturday*, with much truth. Nothing in this regard is more interesting than the obvious fascination which Disraeli felt for him. The two men met in middle life on a common ground of detachment from mere machine politics. Bright's journal for 1852 records, with grave and not unsympathetic irony, the confessions of the great adventurer, his freedom from all prejudice as to the lines of party government, his liking for association with genius, irrespective of feeling and conviction. He would have had Bright and Cobden join him in the great game of governing and dazzling England. Together they would get rid of the 'old stagers' and the 'red tapists'. Bright laughed, and told him that, setting aside the immorality of such a combination, the constituencies would never stand it. 'A man of genius and power,' replied Disraeli, 'may do anything with a large constituency.' Time may, perhaps, record that a not dissimilar effort at a Government of Talents was made and frustrated at the Conference of 1910.

To Disraeli such a plan seemed a natural epilogue of greatness. 'We come here for Fame,' he said. And with a genial pirate's welcome to an honest captain of men, he wished the Quaker statesman Godspeed as a Minister, 'if,' he added, 'you see your own game in what is going to be done'. There are few more instructive passages in our political history than the story of these conversations, and the moral contrast of the men who took part in them. For Disraeli's tender to Bright was by no means so fantastic as it appeared. What were the true lines of division between the mid-Victorian statesmen who alternatively backed each other's fortunes and tripped each other's heels? They were small enough; for the nation was not in politics at all. It was Bright's work to bring it there. He thus opened to the impressionable but not original mind of Gladstone the career of a modern statesman. But the true deliverer was the Tribune, not the Senator – a man who never took first rank in a Cabinet, and never passed a great Bill.

It is interesting to lovers of mankind to discover how tender a character was hidden behind Bright's rather gruff reserve of bearing. His letter to his elder children describing their young brother's death is one of the most affecting in literature. After his moving words on the death of Cobden, he records in his journal: 'I sat down sobbing with grief, and trembling with excitement and passionate sorrow'. 'Be merciful, Hawkins, be merciful,' said Bright to the famous judge on hearing of his appointment to the Bench. He hated all sports but fishing, and then half rejoiced in an empty basket, reprobated capital punishment, and interceded with the hard justice of the time to save more than one condemned criminal. With some sternness, he bade Justin McCarthy, an Irishman and a Nationalist, then in charge of the *Morning Star*, head off the hue and cry for the blood of the Manchester Fenians. He desired to see the anti-slavery struggle go through to its bitter end, but he stamped out of his countrymen's hearts one flame of passion and folly after another. To such a personality conventional praise or blame – and both can freely be applied to him – are of no relevance. Nature rarely made grander stuff; or fitted it better to the service of man.

From the 'Nation' of May 31, 1913.

NOTE

These political portraits were all done in the day's work in the midst of a hundred distractions, a multiplicity of editorial decisions and managements, a Paddington of diverging lines of mental interests. But their masterly workmanship and finality of judgment give the impression that they were deliberated in an atmosphere of calm detachment and leisurely research.—H.J.M.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT

It is a tribute of bare justice to Mr. Gardiner's *Life of Sir William Harcourt*[1] to say that in quality and texture it compares with the best of the many records of representative men of the nineteenth century. Its excellence of workmanship – in the flow and natural sequence of its narrative, in the elucidation of issues, in the treatment of abundant and very difficult material – is beyond praise. A better ordered tale was never told. But biography being, above all other things, the art of portraiture, the instinctive and the literary judgment on it depends on the power to present an idea in the image of a personality. And this is precisely the measure of Mr. Gardiner's success. Harcourt's character is not only there; it is rescued from the dust that time throws over the meaning of life, and handed down for the instruction and the imaginative uses of a later age.

There is no need to overstress the value of what is thus brought to the light. Harcourt was neither a seer nor a man of first-rate genius; neither a master nor a supreme interpreter of his age. He called himself a Philistine, and, in fact, he was a magnificent worldling, enjoying every hour he spent amid the booths of Vanity Fair. But that he was a great public servant, no less than a fundamentally honest, unselfish, and noble man, consistent in the heart-sense of the word rather than in its accidents, every candid reader of Mr. Gardiner's skilful and essentially restorative work must allow. A strong and often ungovernable temper overlay the rich endowment of Harcourt's mind, and marred its fruit. Nevertheless, I think that of the middle Gladstonian circle he stands out *facile princeps*. The popular notion of him as a Major Dalgetty, a swashbuckling soldier of fortune, disappears under Mr. Gardiner's revelation of the man as he was. Devoted to his broad, though not profound, conception of Liberal doctrine, he left the arts of pushfulness to others. There never was a combination richer in possible Prime Ministers than the Liberal Party of 1868 to 1904. Harcourt, in his own despite, cherished them all. It seems something of a paradox to think of him as a

[1] *The Life of Sir William Harcourt.* By A. G. Gardiner. 2 vols. (Constable.)

'smoother', but that in effect he was. But for him both Chamberlain and Hartington would have left the Liberal Party over and over again. As for Lord Rosebery, a determined push by a designing rival, if Harcourt had been one, would easily have destroyed him. Nor was Harcourt's service to Liberal unity a mere exercise of worldly tact. For years it was his care to mother the intractable Chamberlain, and to sow with facts and arguments the never congested area of Hartington's mind. And in the higher walks of friendship this irascible man, 'with the heart of a boy and the temper of a child', proved himself a model of indulgent and helpful sympathy. Without such personalities parties simply cannot exist, as the later fortunes of Liberalism show. And if, or when, Labour succeeds to the Liberal heritage, happy will it be to find a leader as wedded to the idea of service whenever it comes in conflict with the ambition natural to an able and high-spirited man.

For, with all its amiable portrait of Harcourt, it may be doubted whether Mr. Gardiner's book will be quoted in defence of the character of the political man. Indeed, it is hardly possible to conceive a Cabinet fuller of irresponsibles than was the second Gladstone Ministry, unless it were the third and the fourth. Here is a bare abstract of the happenings in less than a single month of the Cabinets of 1885, compiled from a note in the late Lord Harcourt's journal:—

May 9. – Gladstone makes up his mind to resign (if the Crimes Act were renewed).

May 10. – Chamberlain and Dilke threaten resignation on the rejection of Chamberlain's Council scheme.

May 15. – Chamberlain and Dilke resign. Harcourt persuades them to stay. Then Spencer resigns.

May 16. – Childers resigns.

May 19. – Gladstone, Dilke, Childers, all determine to go.

May 20. – Chamberlain and Dilke resign, declaring that Gladstone had tricked them over Land Purchase.

May 22. – Cabinet dissensions revealed to the *Birmingham Post*. Gladstone says these revelations make his life intolerable to him.

June 5. – Childers leaves the room (on the Budget), saying, 'I

cannot stand this'. Gladstone and Harcourt walk by his side soothing him. Granville and Selborne sent for to finish the work of pacification, the latter, suggests Lord Harcourt, to 'pray with and over him'. 'Poor Gladstone,' was Harcourt's comment, 'seems worn out.'

What were the causes of all this friction? To some extent it arose subconsciously from the contest over the succession to Gladstone, a battle in which Harcourt, always near the throne and never actually attaining to it, bore an entirely honourable part. But there were other causes more fundamental. The preoccupation with Ireland was rapidly destroying the Liberal Party. And with the concession of political reform, its work in the scheme of British politics was drawing to an end. To this inevitable decline of Liberalism, Harcourt's later life, in Mr. Gardiner's picture of it, furnishes an instructive, and, now and then, a highly illuminated guide. Like his chief, Harcourt was an individualist. The tragedy of industrialism was beyond his ken; Nuneham and Malwood were far from that madding crowd. His first essay in administration – Bright truly called him the most humane Home Secretary he ever knew – did indeed bring him in contact with one of its by-products, the juvenile offender, and nobly he dealt with it. But his real life-task was to keep the old Liberal idealism alive. He had grown up under that tree of liberty, and he loved it, every bough. Harcourt believed in its temperate and pacific foreign policy, and came near, though he never fully endorsed, the Cobdenite doctrine of non-intervention. He shared, too, the Liberal aversion from war and armaments, while, if he proved a more temperate crusader for national rights than Gladstone, his zeal for economy outran that of all the great cheese-parers, from Gladstone to Geddes. Three notable politicians raised the banner of Imperialism – Disraeli, Chamberlain, Rosebery. With two of them the warm-hearted Harcourt was on terms of private intimacy; the other he despised. But he fought them all; and if he reduced the career of the third to something like absurdity, its doctrine finally overshadowed his own. By every test of merit, Harcourt should have been chosen Prime Minister in 1894. He was in the true Gladstonian succession,

his service was incomparable, and in character and power he was an Achilles, outstripping all the chiefs of the Grecian camp. Why, then, did he fail?

Mr. Gardiner points with truth to some of the causes. Rosebery's skittish charm was one of them. More formidable obstacles were the growth of Imperialism in the party, his colleagues' almost unanimous resentment of his overbearing ways in Cabinet, and Lord Morley's differing view of how the new Government should be made up. But there was one other consideration. The Social Radicals were against Harcourt. They were not Imperialists. But they were thinking of the future. They believed the social question overdue, and were convinced that Gladstonian individualism, deliberately carried to a further term in the shape of a Harcourt Premiership, would never serve their turn. It was in the irony of things that Rosebery, after playing with the hopes his chairmanship of the London County Council had awakened, ran away from them, while Harcourt laid the foundation of the new finance, in the years to come raised the great problem of the moral foundations of State society, and preached to fast-deafening ears the Liberal doctrines of international justice and prudential respect for the weak or the defeated cause.

The political scene in which Harcourt played this spacious rôle is admirably described by Mr. Gardiner, and two characteristics of it at once strike the eye. The first is the important part which constant intercommunication among the chiefs of Liberalism played in an evolution of policy. Harcourt was a first-rate letter-writer, full and frank, human, and abhorrent of cant.[1] And it was through his resolve to keep open a clearing-house of policy that crisis after crisis was deferred or

[1] He much resented interference with the freedom he always exercised in the choice of private friends. The Nonconformist conscience had been much shocked at Chamberlain's repeated visits to Malwood. Harcourt resented this as an impertinence. In a reply to Arnold Morley he wrote that life would be unbearable if he had 'all non-Cons and Parnellites', and suggested that the Press Association should announce that he 'expected the Pope the same week'. All through the hotly-contested battles of his later years, Hartington, Chamberlain, James, Arthur Balfour, remained his constant friends. To James he wrote sweetly on the eve of the Conference, 'Good-bye, my dear old fellow, and good luck for '87. Let us both be happy in the belief that we are both right, and both about to win!'

avoided, and both before and after the Unionist schism the Cabinet kept together. Gladstone was a singularly tolerant chief. But he aged rapidly, and when he took his turn to Home Rule, his way with his colleagues, admitted one by one to the inner chamber in which the great man nursed his secret, was more devious than Harcourt approved.

On the tactics of the great adventure the two men differed sharply, and it has yet to be proved that Harcourt was wrong. Gladstone disliked Chamberlain, and took a low measure of his character and abilities. But I had it on Lord Morley's authority that his manœuvring to keep the member for Birmingham out of the Cabinet of 1886 was due to his feeling that at his age, and with the immense complication of his subject, he could not fight the Bill with Chamberlain nominally in his camp, and really in the enemy's. Nevertheless, it may well be true that in Harcourt's effort to keep Chamberlain there, and, later on, to draw him back by means of the Round Table Conference – which was entirely his work – lay the true strategy of Home Rule. Gladstone, as a letter to Harcourt shows, was in opposition, and so was Morley. Neither of them believed in Chamberlain's good faith. Chamberlain's 'egotism, irascibility, and perversity has landed him in a vile mess', said Lord Morley. He had 'no wisdom' and 'no temper'. And Gladstone took a much more contemptuous view of Chamberlain's position in the country. After all, he and Trevelyan would only represent six or eight votes! Harcourt, however, persisted. Mixing, as he was wont to do, the jocular with the serious arts, he decked himself at a peace dinner at Grafton Street with a huge orchid in compliment to the prize he wanted to capture. When, after the famous letter to the *Baptist*, the negotiation broke down, Harcourt himself was disillusioned and from that hour the field was set for the great battle over Imperialism which Chamberlain captained from one side and Harcourt from the other.

The second vital event in Harcourt's life, which was also a turning-point in the later history of Liberalism, was his conflict with, and his stage overthrow of, Lord Rosebery. Mr. Gardiner's quiet and balanced account is a little marred by Lord Rosebery's refusal of his share in the accompanying correspon-

dence, with the result that, while Harcourt's figure stands out in its usual massiveness, Lord Rosebery's makes at best but a phantom appearance, fading away into a wraith-like exit. The earlier relationship was almost affectionate; while it lasted Rosebery was Harcourt's debtor for more than one deed of active kindness.[1] And in the crowning trial of the Rosebery Premiership, Harcourt behaved with dignity, rejecting his son's entreaty to refuse service with the 'Peer Premier', and only reserving his right, as Leader of the House of Commons, to receive full and regular information on foreign affairs. The challenge came from the other side. Lord Rosebery was so ill-advised as to send the Chancellor a hostile memorandum on the great Budget. The document is not printed in these volumes, but Harcourt's withering reply settled the question of who was to be master in that ill-starred Administration. He had demanded a Cabinet on the two memoranda, but Rosebery lacked stomach for a fight. 'I knew that coon would come down', was Lord Harcourt's delighted comment on the withdrawal.

The final encounter lasted from 1894 to the close of Harcourt's life. Again, it was a battle of principles, not a vulgar clash. Both men were Whigs and aristocrats. But one possessed a trained and positive mind, the other an amateurish and discursive one. It is impossible to think that Rosebery ever cherished a clear conception of the life of a party, and of how it could be sustained. But that was Harcourt's great gift. Incessant in labours, he had toiled all his life to keep Liberalism definite, a well-marked creed of peace, economy, and reform. 'I disapprove of cross-bench minds and corner seats', he wrote to Lord Morley. While, therefore, he clearly disconnected Rosebery's attitude on the South African War from Chamberlain's, and diligently sifted the wheat from the chaff of the Chesterfield speech, he was sworn foe to the Liberal League and all its works. He would have no disintegration of the Liberal front, no truck with Haldane's sceptical formulæ and Rosebery's vague Imperialism. His line henceforward was to stick to 'C.B.' (himself a strategist of no mean account) and with Lord Morley to state the case for the older Liberalism.

[1] Including the Garter.

But there was no more victory for him. The deceptive rally on Free Trade did, indeed, bring the Liberal Party together in a formal reunion. But it was collected only to meet a world in arms, and to fall with it into irreparable disaster.

To sum up, Harcourt was a great ordinary man, with an extraordinary talent for the business of politics, the administration of offices, and the governance of political men. His mind was an orderly affair. He was about as mystical as Walpole, whom he judged to be the greatest British Minister. But his moral gifts were both conspicuous and unusual. Lover as he was of the grand rôle and the grand appearance, he yet lived well above the mean and desiccated air where all is given up to the pursuit of the shoddy prizes of place and glory. Gladstone, who was frightened of his jovial wit and pagan mood, and never quite understood him, spoke truly of the 'depth and force' with which Harcourt felt for others. Indeed, for a politician, he possessed too much heart rather than too little. His great ambition was for his son, as was his son's for him,[1] and the abundant record of his friendships makes the fairest page of his life. The thing that limited and even spoiled his fine intelligence was his too combative temper and his almost exclusive devotion to party interests. For Harcourt party, and the defence of party, were meat and drink, occupation and amusement, excitement and religion. And for this he paid the penalty in a life-long narrowness of spiritual vision. For parties

[1] Mr. Gardiner thus describes the familiar relationship of Harcourt and 'Loulou' (Lord Harcourt):

'It was a union of singularly opposite temperaments. Harcourt was violent and impatient, his voice loud and his laughter unrestrained as a child's. He was quick to anger, but he was as quick to forget his anger and to make fun of his own impatience. His enjoyment of life was unflagging, and his manners and habits were the free, unconsidered expression of his enormous vitality. In all these, and other respects, he furnished a striking contrast to his son. "Loulou" spoke quietly and moved softly. His voice was never raised in anger, and no circumstances ever disarmed his invulnerable restraint and politeness. Whatever his emotions might be, they were kept under the discipline of an iron will, and he was most to be feared when his voice was most velvety. Unlike his father, who wore his heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at, and poured out all that was in his mind regardless of consequences, "Loulou" pursued his path silently and remorselessly. That path had one constant goal, the interest of the father, who was the dominating passion of his life.'

come and go, and they who make Bibles of their fading script rarely see far.

From the 'Observer' of March 11, 1923.

NOTE

Apart from its intrinsic qualities and warmth in Harcourt's defence, this essay forms a further valuable commentary upon my father's attitude to Liberalism – which is all rolled up into one ball in the last sentence.—H.J.M.

SIR CHARLES DILKE: A REMINISCENCE

It is necessary to remember what Sir Charles Dilke lost in 1885, and what he had a chance of becoming, in order to realize the achievement of his later career. He started alone, with a woman who believed in him. He had parted with most of his influential public friends, though with few of his private and intimate ones. He had wealth and an intellect packed with many kinds of knowledge and experience. Office in a Ministry, for which he was so peculiarly fitted, was closed to him. What was he to do? What outlet could he choose for his incessant activities, his habit of and passion for public work? An avenue opened out to him and to his wife which was equally congenial to both. In the late 'eighties the labour question shared with Ireland the interest of liberal and inquiring minds. Outside Parliament a powerful movement, at once of revolt and of reform, was on foot. Socialism of the opportunist type was beginning to affect Liberal thought, to raise new regiments for the trade-union army, full of fire and zeal, and to mould, amid much resistance and with proper reservations, the forces of the older Unionism. The wretched condition of the unskilled and the women workers impressed every generous mind, and revealed the incompleteness of trade unionism on its earlier basis, and the gross neglect of the State. Here, then, was need; need of help from Parliament and Liberal statesmanship, need of private guidance, patronage, encouragement. Much of the raw material of leadership in the new unionism – Burns, Mann, Tillett – was of the ablest; and the Fabian phalanx was of first-rate critical and fighting quality. But there was no immediate link between it and Parliamentary Liberalism, the one effective auxiliary that offered.

Help came through the Dilke household. Lady Dilke's affectionate and sympathetic nature had very largely been given over to pure *expertise* in literature and art. She was a specialist in French decorative art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; withal, a graceful, accomplished woman of the world. She was above all a person of unflinching courage. She was passionately devoted to her husband; she longed

to fill his life and hers with a worthy and absorbing pursuit; she found, and he with her, that the troubles of chain-makers and pottery-workers and shop-assistants and tailoresses were the stuff of which a great part of British politics must be made. They were a powerful combination. There was no guile or affectation in their interest. Both had great social qualities, which were delightful enough to their new friends. She possessed, with her woman's heart, the literary gift, the power of clear, unrhetorical statement. He had his almost unexampled faculty for absorbing facts, his great experience, his love of Parliament, his tact, suavity, unruffled temper, his expert habit of mind, his methodical, devouring industry. Between them they unquestionably raised the labour question to a height in the thought and counsels of statesmen it had never acquired before. It happened in the tragedy of things that the full effect of their influence could not be felt till she was in her grave, and the lot had manifestly been drawn against him. But both of them must be counted fortunate in the choice that gave to him, who in his middle prime was freely talked of for the Premiership, a fuller and in many ways a happier and more real career than belongs to official middle-class statesmanship, and to her the knowledge that the man whom she had nobly chosen in the hour of his disaster was in touch with the vital movement of his times.

On one side of his political thinking and activities, Sir Charles Dilke remained the average opportunist statesman, unorthodox on army organization, strictly orthodox on the Navy, Imperialist with many qualifications, a little indeterminate as a critic of specific new departures in defence or home politics – in many particulars leaning to the typical colonial view of our problems. All these fields he trod laboriously, a little painfully; as a critic who was not likely to become an agent. For some time, too, he had to suffer the fate that all full minds suffer in the House of Commons, lacking the supreme gift of style. He had largely to create an instructed opinion on the labour question; in the absence of a Labour Party, the House was apathetic, as, till sedition and reform woke it up, it was apathetic about India. But knowledge and the inevitable progress and tendency of events conquered in the end. Dilke laboured

more effectually for others than for himself. He schooled the recruits of the Labour Party in the difficult, little-comprehended arts of Parliamentarism. He was pedagogue to a dozen stumbling learners, and in these acts of service the gross, self-regarding temper of politics was refined by a man who, in the days of his power as a great official, would not have been marked out as of a specially chivalrous type.

This task involved incessant labour, journeyings, investigations, speech-making on humble platforms, the patience of diplomacy without its large theatre and splendid associations. Old habits of command and initiative had to bend; but the freshness of the new associations readily commended themselves to a fastidious, but a very human, temperament; and those who knew the Dilke household in those days knew that it possessed pure and radiant sources of pleasure. No material reward awaited the pioneer; his work was premature and non-sensational, it dealt with infinite and small detail, to which the House of Commons sometimes listened with the frigid air it devotes to little-understood subjects, outside the all-absorbing whirl of party strife. Nor did any new positive formation come of these efforts. Dilke might have liked to form a new Radical Party, or to witness and assist its growth. It could hardly have accepted his leadership on all points, for in spite of his pliable spirit, he remained in foreign affairs a highly cautious diplomat, regardful of the perplexities, the delicate and incessantly changing convolutions of the world of States. But the new leaven worked. Dilke remained a sufficiently good party man, and the leaders had no ground of quarrel with him. But he had enlarged his horizon, and enriched his experience of the world. Blurred and marred as was his fate, a spirit of fresh and ennobled service informed the last twenty-five years of his life, and, in its remembrance, enables his friends to think of him, and of the brave woman who put her hand in his, as of beings who, securing fresh and absorbing objects of intellectual study and personal devotion, have renewed their force and reconquered the destiny that they sought and won together.

'Thy soul and thy Stella's beside it,
A star by a star.'

From the 'Nation' of February 4, 1911.

NOTE

The following are quotations from the letters: 'My own heart and soul are now irrevocably given to Labour. I was always more of a Socialist than a Liberal, and my part in pace-making in the Liberal field is done. The tide has simply gone over Liberalism'.

'All that I'm afraid about the Labour Party,' he writes in another letter, 'is that they'll not be real libertarians (read Whitman's 'Libertad'). And I think I care about that more than about anything else. When I was a boy I used to sing the hymn:

I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold,
I did not love my shepherd's voice,
I WOULD not be controlled.

I hate folds and shepherds. Don't you?'—H.J.M.

THE PROPHET IN POLITICS: LORD COURTNEY

When great men die the age they enriched seems suddenly to shrink into poverty. Lord Courtney was such a man; and his death reveals just such a barrenness. The events of our time are of stupendous magnitude; they are the creatures of man, yet they seem to ask of him more than he can give. They demand that he should be a better, nobler being, as well as a far more clear-sighted one, than he seems able to be. Yet it is an equally pertinent reflection that if the best of humanity – best in wisdom and in moral force – had been at the head of our society, and could have been fairly distributed among its nationals, it would never have plunged into the gulf of the war. Beyond doubt, Lord Courtney was such a guide; his creed was an insurance against disasters such as have befallen us. He was more than a guide; he was a prophet. The world is always calling out for prophets; but when it gets them, it either fails to recognize them, or labels without listening to them. Courtney long foresaw the trouble in South Africa which ended in the Boer War, and long laboured to avert it. He was hardly less aware of the advancing storm in Europe. Had he been Prime Minister – and it is astonishing that a man of his capacity of speech and intellect never reached Cabinet rank – and had a like-minded statesman led Germany, there would have been no war. Less endowed with the constructive than with the moral faculty, he saw the perils of the modern State more clearly than its opportunities. But he was essentially right in calling aloud for the great moral-intellectual qualities in government – toleration, understanding, mutual justice and forbearance, self-criticism. A great moralist indeed he was, and a world sickening for the want of goodness and common sense must yet take such remedies as he offered or die for the lack of them.

But if Leonard Courtney was in the line of the prophets, he was also a practical man. He championed winning causes, not losing ones. Just as it was his habit to look like a man of granite, and be an extremely lovable one, so, like his master, Mill, he lived for the mass and not for any philosopher's prize

of abstract thought. Thus with an extremely masculine mind, cautious of sentimentalism, he could not bear to base the State solely on man's suffrage. He wanted to give it the best material it could collect, secure for wisdom and experience their full opportunity, and put some bounds to the party spirit. But as he aimed at obtaining *quality* in democracy, and wished Parliament to be a mirror of the national life, so he would never allow that only man should see his face in it. The same with existing institutions. Greatly to the surprise of many friends, this staunch Radical, of no fortune or social pretence, became a member of the House of Lords, and so dignified a one that, judging by his dress and his demeanour, he would have been accounted a Duke at least, and of a proud and ancient stock. But he at once proceeded to put his new position to its right use. He thought of himself as a Senator and counsellor in politics. But he was no crotcheteer or obstructor. He did not stand for privilege but for reflection, for second thoughts. A little dogmatic in tone, for he knew much, and loved not shallowness of mind, his intellect was truly helpful and tolerant. Thus he took sides and avoided strict partisanship; spoke his mind, and sought concord; argued and warned, but was essentially temperate and appealing. Reasonableness was his; often sweet reasonableness, sometimes a note of superiority, a touch of the lecture-room. But always a double attachment to truth and to fine temper, combined in an effort to check the horrible passions that have broken loose and ravage mankind. Unhappily for political society, it breeds a dozen Lloyd Georges for one Courtney; our suicidal journalism understands only the first type, and ignores or belittles the other.

Lord Courtney was, I suppose, an individualist; he thought that State Socialism, expressed in and working through Imperialist institutions and the Imperialist temper, had something to answer for in the troubles of the world, and that Man must stand up for himself, let his conscience speak, and put Government in its place. So he stood, with Lady Courtney, for C.O.'s and people who thought the mind should be free, even in war; set up with her a Christian service of kindness to forlorn dependents of hostile aliens, and thus watered a kindred plant in Germany. Powerless to stay the greater mischief, he

tried to foster here and there, when God willed, some slight 'culture' of healing influence. Very early in the War, he came to the conclusion that military force would never end it, that after periods of ebb and flow, a deadlock of the main armies would recur, and become a fixed element. Therefore, he insisted that an early peace was better than a late one; and that though a League of Nations (of which he was a little sceptical) was useful, the state of moral appeasement which he craved must come immediately at least through the cessation of physical violence rather than from the creation of an ideal political order. I think he pictured society (and not merely Germany) as a kind of Prodigal Son. Driven to the husks, the prodigal's wisdom lay in getting home again.

In the mid-eighties of his life, Lord Courtney did a young man's work, and disdained no helper, however humble. He never got tired and never gave up. Without being a party man, he conceived his task as that of giving an intelligent direction to party aims, and making the party man realize what his cries and watchwords meant. Thus he belonged to an almost classical type of intellectual activity, whose ends were essentially moral, and save for the satisfaction of his love of man, in no sense self-regarding. He possessed a certain pride of character, answering to a slightly formal address and personal demeanour. He looked, indeed, to be markedly of the *grand monde*, and for this in truth he lived, and was one of its *grands seigneurs*. But this 'great world' was the world of humanity; no class, and no class interest, intervened to limit his view and intercept and adulterate his sympathies. He believed in himself, but he was too serious for vanity. He could be a little contemptuous of bad men and their handiwork; but his mind was equable; and as it was always engaged, and had many occupations and interests, he enjoyed life and the society of kindred minds, and in dark times never despaired. Weakened sight, and more than one warning illness, did not avail to slacken his grasp of life or seriously cut down his many-sided reading. On the whole, he was the best controversialist of his time. He was one of the most constant correspondents of the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, and his letters, acutely practical in aim, were also little essays in constitutional

law, in political morals, in legislative statesmanship. His style was virile and weighty, but not at all dull. His speeches were delivered in a strong, rather harsh voice, their meaning given out and emphasized in the working of his boldly marked face. The tone might have been thought a trifle pedagogic. But it rose to high eloquence when, as in the case of the famous indictment of the Chamberlain-Milner diplomacy, the speaker linked events in time with their character in the sphere of moral truth. I do not know that Lord Courtney possessed a fixed creed. But his life was religion. And if he exhibited a certain austerity of mind, which made men think of him, half resentfully, as a kind of Cato, an over-stern censor of his age, this habit of fixed judgment constantly yielded and flowed into the Christian spirit. He was thus a great example, for he was both a preacher and a doer of the Word, and spoke wisdom to men with the sole intent that they should deal more kindly and justly with each other.

From the 'Nation' of May 18, 1918.

NOTE

A dead man praised with such beauty, delicacy and precision might well let his mind wander from the garden of souls to the dusty, spinning wilderness in which he laboured with a tenderness untouched by vainglory.—H.J.M.

'When they met Dr. Clifford,' said Dean Inge at a dinner of the Empire Club given in the Doctor's honour, 'they found him a most gentle and courteous man, and they were rather surprised.' It appeared that, knowing Clifford's controversial style, the Dean, though not himself incapable of apostolic knocks, had expected a gryphon. The impression was quite a common one. Clifford's ascetic face, with its eager expression, no less than the extreme energy of his platform manner, gave it wide vogue. But there never was a greater delusion. If he hated anybody, it was in the purest Pickwickian sense, and had he ever withheld the sacrament of Christian Charity from some erring Episcopalian or perverted Roman, the ban would have been lifted almost as soon as imposed.

The key to Clifford's rhetorical fierceness was his Puritanism. He had the Puritan zeal, and the Puritan culture yielded him its stock of ideals and antipathies. The antipathies were in no way remarkable. Clifford did not believe in sacramentalism; he thought the priest a bad element in Church and State, and he vehemently desired to see the two powers separated from each other. What was peculiar to him was his passion for the noblest of all the Puritan traditions. English Puritanism, as a recent German writer has remarked, differed from German Lutheranism in its belief that civil society and civil politics ought to rest on religious foundations, and assume a democratic form. This was the Alpha and the Omega of Clifford's creed. It is the glory of English Puritanism that the idea of the City of God, which did not come wholly from Christianity, first took shape in its vision of a Christian Commonwealth. Clifford, though not a thinker, believed in the idea of a State governed by righteous men for righteous ends, and lived for it. He did not lose the passion for individual salvation which his creed, his profession as a Baptist minister, and his sympathetic and very human temperament, kept alive in him. But it is no disparagement to his career to say that it was lived more on the social-political platform than in the pulpit.

Sir James Marchant, his biographer,[1] somewhat slurs over Clifford's conversion to Socialism, just as he hardly makes plain to the lay reader the special issues which lay between him and Spurgeon in the 'Down Grade' controversy. The truth about both these incidents was that Clifford, the Liberal and the Evangelical Nonconformist, found that the forms of Liberalism and Evangelicalism, familiar to his youth and early manhood, were not enough. Neither had much to say to the problem of poverty, and Clifford was the child of the cotton-mill as well as of the simple pieties of a religious workman's household.[2] A form of Radical Socialism became, indeed, a necessary resource for a man of his humane impulses and energetic temperament. The intense God-centred, and also a little self-centred, spirituality of the early type of Dissenter had gone, never to return, and Nonconformity was shading more and more into Liberalism. Clifford, indeed, never hardened into the average party Liberal of the type of Dale and Arthur Mursell. But the world for him was not exactly the inner world of soul conflict in which Fox and Bunyan lived. It was a world of 'progress' and 'reforms', of committees and organizations, of elections and political programmes.

There was a sense in which, in spite of Clifford's gifts as a speaker, his direct, fervent style and contagious enthusiasm, joined to wonderful physical endurance, the atmosphere of politics was not entirely suited to him. His mind was too simple, too uncritical. Sir James Marchant says with truth that he was not a good judge of men. His transparent honesty hardly reckoned with the subtleties, the reserves, still less with the downright faithlessness, of the political class. And the excitement, the bustling externality, of the political life beguiled him into thinking too highly both of its moralities and

[1] *Dr. John Clifford, C.H., Life, Letters, and Reminiscences.* By Sir James Marchant, LL.D. (Cassell.)

[2] He was one of the 'free children' attached to the mill, a 'piecer' whose duty was to splice the cotton-ends. 'I have worked,' he records in his diary, 'from four o'clock on Friday morning all through the night to six o'clock on Saturday evening, and then run home glad and proud with my small wage of two shillings and sixpence to my mother – like a hero.'

of its powers, under such leaders as Clifford knew and followed, of curing or alleviating social evils. He was apt to think in millenniums. He conceived (in 1909) that it would be possible to have 'a hand-to-hand fight with all the tyrannies and despotisms at once', and that 1910 would 'open with Armageddon'. When he went to Italy and saw the complex machinery of Catholic polity at work, he imagined that it was just the time and the field for a great Protestant mission to the unconverted. 'We must send a man here at once,' he wrote home.

As with causes, so with men. Clifford 'lined up' in support of the Great War, not with enthusiasm, but with a wholehearted acceptance of the British case. And he maintained this attitude when, with the conclusion of the Secret Treaties, every semblance of idealism had disappeared from the conflict, and the language and gestures of its defenders were those of the 'knock-out blow'. What was the explanation? Clifford was no Jingo, and he was the soul of candour. But his intellect was in Mr. Lloyd George's keeping. How unreserved, how naïve, was his confidence, may be judged from his own report of the famous breakfast in which Nonconformity was induced to seal its acceptance of a fight to a finish:—

'*Friday, October* 26, 1917. *Prime Minister's Breakfast.* 9 *a.m.* L.G. was keen and bright, and, as usual, a master of strategy. He first of all reminded us that the room we were in was where William Pitt drank three bottles of wine, and that it had never had so many Nonconformists in it before. He insisted that the majority of the War Council were Nonconformist, and he eulogized the service of Nonconformists in the War at great length. Then he spoke of the 'spiritual appeal' of the War, asserted that the coming in of the U.S.A. would mean more in Peace than in War, and that it should be regarded rather as a moral than as a military fact, since it seeks nothing but the realization of the highest ideals. His next point was to show that more and more of the burden of the War was falling on Great Britain's shoulders. France was war-weary, has made great sacrifices, lost a million and a half by death, but is true to its ideals, and our policy will be to stand by France.

He is very genial, bright, energetic, and kindly. Sat on his right hand and discussed (1) the C.O.'s. He was very strong in his opposition to Absolutists, and did not appear to realize the gravity of the bad faith of the Government in not giving exemption according to the Act. I pointed out that the Absolutists were few compared to the many who had not obtained exemption, and yet could have offered reliable and worthy evidence of their sincerity. (2) The Education Bill, he said, was not dropped; it is necessarily postponed. (3) On the drink question he was not to be moved. (4) He appealed to us to hold up the moral ideals of the War.'

What could be clearer than that the Nonconformists, blooded afresh for the great hunt, had been induced, in the ardour of the chase, to drop their special claims on the conscientious objectors, on education, and on temperance reform? No wonder that their host was moved to remind them, with a hint, maybe, of triumph in his agreeable voice, that the room in which they were assembled 'was where William Pitt drank three bottles of wine, and that it had never had so many Nonconformists in it before'.

But if Clifford was not always a discerning politician, he could only be described as an ornament of the political life. Of its grave vice, which is self-seeking, he had not a trace, and he was equally free from vanity, its more amiable weakness. In an age when leading ministers, both in England and America, were able to collect high fees, and achieve respectable fortunes, Clifford lived and died poor, giving, says his biographer, constant aid to struggling churches and needy pastors. With 'no tincture of malice or ill-nature, he was utterly without guile'. A hero of the platform and the convention, he possessed the virtues which tradition attaches to solitary sainthood, and which, in fact, are the crown of a few unselfish and unspoiled natures, whom no evil in Church or in State can contaminate, and who escape the vulgar snares of the professional life in either vocation. It is for these qualities that Clifford deserves to be remembered more than for any contribution he made to the intellectual life of his times. Dust already lies on many of the controversies in

which he was a shining figure. Passive resistance is over; even the great battle of the Establishment may not quite be decided in Clifford's way; with all his ardour and energy he failed to revive political Nonconformity. But in all that concerned character and conduct he was an example to his generation.

From the 'New Leader' of August 22, 1924.

NOTE

Talk of causes, and this is what H. W. M. once wrote of them in a private letter: 'Love me, love my cause! Causes are really like sweethearts. You wake in the morning and say (first thing), "I wonder how she's going on – the dear, the jade! Haven't seen her for twenty-four hours. Has some villain assailed her? Pray Heaven not!" '—H.J.M.

KEIR HARDIE

It is not possible to write a life of so simple and constant a pattern as Keir Hardie's and to introduce a great variety of texture, or even of colour, into the narrative. Hardie lived for one thing, which he accomplished. He founded the Independent Labour Party. The glory is his and his alone, and so was the sacrifice. A plain domesticity, a few friends, many enemies, a Pauline record of journeys and exhortations [1] – and then death. Hardie's gifts were as his career. Mind and character were fitted to his apostolate; and were sufficiently rather than lavishly endowed for it. He spoke with the natural command of good English that so many Scotchmen possess, with fervour often, with sincerity always – above all, with concentration. Mr. MacDonald truly says of him that he was a Moses, summoned to lead his people out of bondage, though not into the Promised Land. He led them. He brought the intelligent workmen of three countries out of Liberalism, and to a less degree out of political indifferentism. He was not an extremist. But for his 'call' to organize the workmen as a self-dependent force, he might have ended his days as a Radical pacifist. But the moment he put on the prophet's mantle, it could be seen that only he was fitted to wear it. Some of his contemporaries in the Labour Party hated Capitalism as much as he did, and had a more reasoned, certainly a more revolutionary, answer to it. But none had a tithe of his representative capacity. There stood the absolutely independent man. Hardie entered the House of Commons without belonging to it, save as an ambassador from a new and a hostile power; and every speech and gesture he made there was addressed to the unborn thing in politics, not to the finished one. John Burns, destined to mix with middle-class politics and serve in middle-class Cabinets, made his spiritual accommodation with Parliament before he had been six months a member of it. Hardie, never.

Yet within the limits of the career he proposed for himself, Hardie was a man of great personal attraction. Mr. Shaw called him the 'damnedest natural aristocrat in the House of

[1] *J. Keir Hardie: A Biography*. By William Stewart. (Cassell.)

Commons', and Mr. Stewart adds the closer definition that 'he possessed pride of class in the superlative degree'. Indeed, his demeanour was such that if England had become a Socialist Republic within his lifetime, Hardie would have been chosen by acclamation for the presidency, merely on account of his obvious personal equipment for the job. His dignity was a different thing from Gladstone's, for example, though in its way quite as distinguished. Gladstone's grand air fitted itself to the frock-coat and the stove-pipe hat; Hardie's to the tweed suit and the corncob pipe. His choice of attire was not part of the artist's desire for representative perfection, still less was it a self-conscious pose. Hardie wanted to notify his arrival at Westminster, to show that the workman was there and what he looked like. The effect was his justification. The House neither laughed at him nor liked him. But it opened its eyes. Till it saw him, it did not realize that it was possible to figure a State in which totally new conventions might hold, yet retaining great spiritual refinement. To this idealism Hardie was a bodily witness. He did not believe in the Capitalist classes, and distrusted their morality, finding it incompatible with the Christian religion. But it always seemed to me that there was an æsthetic element in his distaste; he considered them vulgar.

There was a second note of individuality in Hardie. Mr. Stewart says correctly that he was not a doctrinaire Socialist. He regarded the transfer of wealth from private to public ownership as an 'incident' in the Socialist crusade rather than its all-important end, therein interpreting three-fourths of its history in world-politics. Socialism appeared to him as a new force in the world of industry, a movement for the social and moral enfranchisement of the manual workman, with special power to deliver him from conscription and war. He thus came into conflict with eminent Marxians like Mr. Hyndman and eminent propagandists like Mr. Blatchford, who, having preached the Social Revolution all their lives, threw it up when the War broke out and fell back to average Nationalism. Hardie, on the other hand, identified all Imperialism, British or foreign, with Capital, while Socialism presented itself less as an economic doctrine than as the promise of a new moral

world, a state of brotherhood. He was, therefore, much more of an internationalist than either the Marxians or the Fabians, disagreeing with the latter on the Boer War and with both on the World War. Yet for all his idealism he was the one working-class leader of his time to recruit a definite Socialist army and to fix the mould into which the main force of Labour-Socialism was destined to flow. Other Socialist leaders established cliques or parlour parties. He formed the mind of the workman.

This feat was due, as Mr. Stewart's excellent biography abundantly shows, less to power of intellect than to Scottish grit and the habit of unflagging industry, and most of all to the fact that, as I have said, Hardie was a great representative man. He appealed to the religious sense of the workmen, and that was a source of power; but having worked through the average Liberalism of his time, he determined to cut them right away from middle-class politics. Henceforth the workman was to stand alone, *as he stood*. There were grave weaknesses in this position, as our after-war politics have shown. But it shook conventional party life to its foundations. And the whole process was logically and clearly developed. Hardie first took his own fellow-workmen, the miners, out of the Liberal camp. Then he established a Labour Press. Finally, through the medium of the L.R.C. and the I.L.P. he set up the politically independent Labour organization. Mr. Beer, the London correspondent of *Vorwaerts*, and the historian of British Socialism, truly describes this as the largest individual contribution ever made to the Socialist cause in Great Britain:—

'His silent, clear-headed, and consistent efforts in the first years of the L.R.C. on behalf of the unity and independence of organized Labour would alone be sufficient to raise him to the front rank of Socialist statesmanship. For what is the essence of modern Socialism as Marx taught it? The political independence of Labour. And what is the foremost duty of a Socialist in the class struggle? To divorce Labour from the parties of the possessing class. All that Keir Hardie has done, more by virtue of a practically unerring proletarian instinct than by theorizing and speculating about revolution and so-

called constructive Socialism. Socialism is not made, but it is growing out of the needs and struggles of organized Labour. The most simple Labour organization, fighting for high wages, shorter hours, and better Labour laws, does more for Socialism than all the Utopian books of Wells, all the Swiftean wit of Shaw, all the revolutionary speeches of Hyndman, and all the sentimental harangues of Grayson.'

As to Hardie's international policy, it took shape in his profound conviction that war was made mainly for profits and dividends, and that Labour's best weapon against it was the general strike. He proposed a resolution to this effect at the International Socialist Congress of 1910; and it is enough to say that his direct and simple mind moved, as it often did, in the way in which the practical thought of his generation has followed him. It has always seemed to me that, failing an automatic system of referring imminent war to a process of delay and conciliation, the general strike, a bad weapon for industrial use, had its proper place in the workmen's armoury as a final weapon against a war suddenly presented to Parliament by their executives and declared to be an 'inevitable' consequence of the failure of undisclosed negotiations. 'I suppose we shall be allowed to say a word or two before war begins?' said Hardie in the Albanian-Montenegrin crisis of 1912, looking with prophetic irony to the event which declared itself sixteen months later. He went into Parliament, says Mr. Stewart, to avert the Russian issue of a Socialist leap to power on the back of a world war – in other words, of that 'direct transition' to Communism which Lenin now exposes as the capital error of Bolshevik strategy. But Hardie was scarcely an active, or perhaps a convinced, Parliamentarian, for the deeper ground of his belief lay in an appeal to the conscience of the *organized* workpeople. When that seemed to fail him in the autumn of 1914, he felt that all was over. At all events, the grave received this single-minded man within a few months of the hour when the spirit, and most of the machinery of European Socialism as he knew it, had turned to dust.

From the 'Nation' of November 5, 1921.

NOTE

On earth there are many mansions of biography, but I think that H.W.M. shows how unnecessary it is to raise pyramids and other imposing mausolea to the spirits of the dead. His fanes, small but classically designed, give us the measure of a man more justly than buildings covering many acres.

He always had a profound admiration for Keir Hardie; he was a man after his own heart, not merely as a fellow-soldier, but a man free of the intellectual subtleties, which, while they never diverted him from the quest of the Graal were often a sad plague to him. Keir Hardie was never ensnared by political expediencies, and was therefore highly attractive to a man who in a private letter could write like this: 'I'm absorbed in the world-struggle for light, and pray (in a feeble kind of way), that I mayn't go wrong in it, and may play the small, small part in it which sets one face to the right battle-line, instead of the wrong. Believe me, this is what is laid on all our plagued generation. None can escape; we are only at the beginning; and the (illegible word – perhaps just as well!) who govern us are the people above all others, who see least what is coming'.—H.J.M.

'What thunders shall those men arraign
Who cannot count those they have slain,
Who bathe not in a shallow flood
But in a deep wide sea of blood?
A sea, whose loud waves cannot sleep
But deep still calleth upon deep:
Whose urgent sound like unto that
Of many waters, beateth at
The everlasting doors above,
Where souls behind the altar move,
And with one strong, incessant cry
Inquire *How Long* of the Most High.'

*

Word over all, beautiful as the sky!
Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of
Carnage, must in time be utterly lost;
That the hands of the sisters, Death and Night, incessantly,
softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:
. . . For my enemy is dead – a man divine as myself is dead;
I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin – I
draw near,
I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face
in the coffin.

HIS POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

H. N. BRAILSFORD

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JOURNALISM, as Massingham practised it, was leadership. One may doubt whether it ever occurred to him to inquire whether the policy he followed would be popular. For the journalism of commerce, which caters for shifting opinion as the dressmaker follows the fashion, he felt and expressed a withering contempt. Partly from intellectual self-respect, partly in obedience to the Nonconformist tradition, which still coloured his outlook on life after he had shed its dogmas and its Puritanism, he took his own brave course, with scant regard to party convenience or the authority of party chiefs. It was this quality of independence and sincerity which made his writing so much more than a literary achievement. He was, indeed, the most scrupulous of craftsmen, critical towards himself, and impatient of careless work in others. Yet, if one had questioned him about his own work, he would not have mentioned his technical achievement as writer and editor. He would have spoken rather of his service to the ideas which inspired him.

Day by day in the *Chronicle*, week by week in the *Nation*, his sensitive mind sought to convey to his readers its own estimate of the values of life. He was striving for a humaner civilization, and battling against every form of commercialism, vulgarity, and cruelty. With the same passion the *Chronicle* would plead for the chainmakers of the Midlands or the horses of the London streets. Against the cruelty and stupidity of our prison system, and of capital punishment, he waged incessant war. He hated Imperialism, and gave up a position of commanding influence because he would not soften his condemnation of the Boer War. It was more than his own personal love of literature which led him to develop that wonderful literary page which for some years made the *Chronicle* the newspaper of every young man and woman who

was mentally alive. He did it because he was resolved that the world of letters and thought should cease to be the possession of the leisured few. While other editors were beginning to make use of photographs, he gave distinction to the pages of the *Daily Chronicle* by reproducing drawings of Pennell, Burne-Jones, Walter Crane and Whistler. No estimate of his work which dwelt on his political influence alone would do justice to the breadth of its humanity. This appeal to ear and eye, this concern for prisoners and animals, expressed, no less than his advocacy of a Radical or Socialist programme, his ideal of a more sensitive civilization.

*

His active influence as a journalist began during those years of eclipse, after the defeat of Home Rule, when the Gladstonian party, out of touch with the new stirrings in the world of Labour, was devoting itself to the Irish Question. On that he never wavered, but he had a feeling (as he put it later), that a good deal of the morality of orthodox Liberalism was 'for export only'. 'Of human values and their fearful deterioration under the factory system, the great manufacturers' party recked rather less than Tories of the type of Disraeli and Shaftesbury'.[1] In these early days he joined the Fabian Society, and was for a time a member of its Executive. It was he, rather than its nominal editor, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who made the *Star* the standard-bearer of the early Progressives on the London County Council, and of the 'New Unionism' which had its stormy origin on 'Bloody Sunday' in Trafalgar Square and in the London Dock Strike (1889). The *Star* advocated the municipalization of the Docks, and opened a Fund for the dockers on strike. In after years the *Chronicle* opened similar funds for miners and engineers, and in 1897 for the Penrhyn quarrymen. The Radical programme, as Massingham developed it in the *Star*, derived its inspiration partly from Henry George, and partly from the Fabians and the New Unionism. He emphasized especially the restoration of the English country-side through the extension of small holdings and the creation of parish councils; the taxation of land values; the opening of Parlia-

[1] *New Leader*, November 30, 1923.

ment to the manual workers, through adult suffrage and the payment of members and returning officers' expenses; the development of democracy through the 'educational ladder', and the leisure which a legal Eight Hours Day would secure; the extension of municipal Socialism; the taxation of the idlers, i.e. graduated income-tax and death duties; and Old Age Pensions. This may seem to-day a very moderate programme, but it implied a challenge to the individualism of the Liberal tradition, and to the leadership both of Gladstone and Morley. For the latter Massingham felt a life-long respect, but he wrote on one occasion that it was hopeless to dream of removing the indifference of the working-class electorate, until 'Mr. Morley shows for the East End docker the enthusiasm which he has rightly developed for the Connemara cotter'.[1]

It was Massingham's practical sympathy with the workers which brought the first test of character in his life as a journalist. His advocacy of the legal Eight Hours Day in the *Star* was embarrassing to the Liberal leaders (who were opposing the Miners' Bill), and Mr. O'Connor, who usually took his editorial duties lightly, imposed his veto. Massingham resigned, but appealed to the shareholders and directors and eventually won his battle, with the result that it was not he but Mr. O'Connor who retired. The victory, however, was brief. Massingham was now editor, and the *Star*, after some months of orthodox Liberalism, resumed its radical tone, until it exhausted the patience of the political director, Professor Stuart. During Massingham's absence on holiday he wrote a leading article sharply criticizing John Burns for his intervention in a Scottish railway strike. Without a moment's hesitation, Massingham resigned again, and this time the separation was final. For a journalist of character to advocate a Socialistic policy under Capitalistic directors will always be a difficult adventure. The *Chronicle* soon gave him a wider field for his creative imagination, but once again Capital had the last word, and after five brilliant years (1895–99) his disagreement with the proprietors over the Boer War compelled him for the second time to resign an editorship. He would never compromise over essentials; throughout his life the

[1] *New Review*, December, 1889.

hatred of Imperialism was as deeply rooted in him as his sympathy with Labour and his abiding interest in the recovery of the land for the people.

The evolution which eventually brought Massingham into the ranks of the Labour Party sums up the history of his generation. He had a typically English dislike of dogmas and systems. It is not enough to say that Marxian thinking had no influence on him: he rejected it with something akin to abhorrence. An economic interpretation of history was alien to his temperament: his outlook was always ethical. It was sympathy with the sweated worker, horror at the bestiality of our slums, and above all, in his later years, a sense that Capitalistic direction is an offence against the personality of the worker,[1] which ranged him on the side of Labour. But from the first, and for many a long year, he was critical of the composition of the Labour Party. He disliked the predominance of the Trade Unions. Again and again he would say of it that 'while representing a tremendous and vital force in the national life, it just falls short of standing for a nation'.[2] He wished that it had taken the name of 'the democratic party'. He rejoiced when he interpreted some speech or resolution as a repudiation of the doctrine of the class-war. 'But class-government,' he would add, 'is only the class-war in mufti'.[3] He contrasted a 'class-party' with a 'policy-party'. The Trade Union basis, in short, obscured the fact that the Labour Party had a programme which aimed broadly at national well-being. When the Fabian Society (in November, 1893) despaired of its original tactics of permeating the Liberal Party with Socialism, Massingham still believed that with adult suffrage, payment of members, and the second ballot, a Left Wing, based on the manual workers, could elect members enough to overshadow the Capitalist element in Liberalism.[4] His own predominantly ethical outlook made him reluctant to face the

[1] Speaking of Mr. Ford and his employees in the *Spectator* (Nov. 3, 1923), he wrote, 'He gives orders; they obey them. He thinks; they work. He organizes their way of life; they accept it'.

[2] *Nation*, July 8, 1922.

[3] *Nation*, April 20, 1912.

[4] See *Contemporary Review*, December, 1893.

crude fact of the class-struggle. He believed in persuasion, in the power of disinterested ideals as the driving force of progress, and in the Liberal Party as their natural instrument.

Massingham personified his politics: he had, indeed, an almost Carlylean belief in the hero, but always the Cause commanded his loyalty when the object of his worship was untrue to it, and then indeed the idolater turned iconoclast. It was Lord Rosebery's sympathetic record as Chairman of the London County Council which led Massingham to cast the weight of the *Chronicle's* influence on his behalf when Gladstone's leadership came to an end. He discarded him (though not with the vehemence which he afterwards displayed towards Mr. Lloyd George), as much because of his 'whims' and his irresponsibility, as because of his Imperialism. The years which elapsed between the Boer War and 1914 were a relatively hopeful and tranquil period in the internal life of the Liberal Party. To 'C. B.' Massingham was more than loyal; Mr. Asquith he tolerated, with an occasional flicker of temperate enthusiasm; in Mr. Churchill he hailed the coming man; Mr. Lloyd George, up to the Marconi incident, was his chosen leader. Liberalism in its domestic policy was on the whole fulfilling the Radical programme which the *Star* had advocated in 1889. Throughout these years it was in its prophetic criticisms of Sir Edward Grey's policy of the Balance of Power that the *Nation* showed its independence. It foresaw the end, and whether it wrote of Persia or Morocco, the naval rivalry, or the Entente with Russia, the coming War cast a sombre shadow over pages which were otherwise devoted to the defence of Liberal policy. The attitude towards Labour was invariably one of encouragement, spoken in tones of the friendly spectator. 'Liberalism, in the broad sense, still corresponds to the most definite tendencies of the best European thought of our times'.[1] Massingham wished that the ensuing Election might bring an 'unsigned electoral entente' with Labour, and hoped that it would have its share of seats in the next Liberal Cabinet. It was the failure of the Labour Party to throw up any leader of the calibre of a Jaurès which disappointed him. He thought that the 'honest but narrow

[1] *Nation*, April 20, 1912.

intellectualism' of the Fabians, 'tinged as it was with a Conservative bias', had 'largely sterilized the movement. . . . Trade Unionism has always dominated the Labour Party, not the Labour Party Trade Unionism. The end of these divisions is something like an intellectual failure, the only one which Socialism has made in Europe since the writing of *Das Kapital*'. He would on occasion during those years pen an apology for Socialism, but always in the tone of an historian who records the progress of a new religion, which he welcomes but cannot wholly accept.[1]

It was the War which made the real breach between Massingham and the Liberal Party. He never forgave its leaders for the adoption of conscription, for their compromises with Protection, for the Secret Treaties, for the crime of the Versailles Peace, and the folly of Russian intervention. He began to think of Labour as the 'only true Peace Party left in Europe'. He would say, when he wrote of the blockade of Russia and the starvation of Vienna, that 'the narrowest Labour Government would not have done these things, if it had taken the natural sympathies of the workers as its guide'. The post-war revolutionary movement on the Continent, which was already beginning to frighten the timider Liberals into reaction, was for him a stimulus which helped him to state, no longer as an aloof, if sympathetic, spectator, the fundamental moral claim of Socialism. He saw the deeper meaning of this 'unrest'.

[1] 'A society which for nineteen hundred years has professed the Christian ideal without working with undue haste to its realization, need not concern itself overmuch with crude attempts to rebuild the modern State more or less in harmony with that ideal. Men will go on for generations making laws in the Socialist fashion, and breaking or despising them after the anarchist model, without abolishing law or capitalism or destroying private enterprise. . . . The human struggle for liberty and against injustice will go on amid these apparent contradictions, only now and then conscious of its victories, and always looking forward to a perfection that only a thoroughly cleansed and exalted humanity will realize. And politicians whose business it is to deal in immediate difficulties will be unwise to grudge to workmen the elements of hope and imagination that Socialism supplies, often as their main intellectual and moral resource in a brief and obscure pilgrimage. At least Socialism does not spoil the lives of workmen; like religion it raises and softens them, and is a substitute for their grosser temptations.' – *Nation* (January 25, 1908. Leader on the adoption by the Labour Party Conference of a general Socialist resolution).

'Allow something for the fractiousness that is merely the sediment of the War. Beyond that there is the demand for the revision of the social contract. Capital can no longer govern alone. . . . Power must be divided and dispersed. The workman will no longer consent to lose all personal initiative in his daily toil, he will insist on taking his turn in the creative, productive, and managing processes; and though here there are limits, which his want of education prescribes, the joint control of industry has come to stay.' [1]

These were the ideas, combined with his disgust with the Coalition, and his angry contempt for Mr. Lloyd George, which led him, at the General Election of 1918, to advise his readers to vote Labour, and turned four issues of the *Nation* into powerful electoral pamphlets for the Labour Party. The party's new definition of the word Labour, to include brain-workers, as well as hand-workers, had met one of his criticisms against the class-basis. Its new recruits from among the anti-war Liberals were adding to its intellectual resources. 'It is', he wrote in 'Wayfarer's' Diary,

'the natural home of the intellectuals of the Left, of the younger Nonconformists and of the younger clergy, sick of their leaders' practical atheism, their formalism and funk. If it holds together, and strengthens its leadership, broadens its faith, and deepens its intellectual appeal, nothing can stay its advent to power'.

The programme which he advocated at this Election deserves to be recorded:

1. *International Politics.* – Universal Disarmament, with no conscription, open Diplomacy, and a standing Council of Nations, interpreting an international Labour code and charged with the permanent preservation of peace.
2. *Home Politics.* – The national control of the land and its supporting industries of mines, transport, and electrical power. This last change should make a six-hour working day possible. A great educational programme to follow on this nationalization of leisure. This would in turn create an equality

[1] *Nation*, July 26, 1919.

of opportunity. This in turn must involve a rise in the character of Labour, open to it the direction of capital, and thus raise both its status and its reward.

3. *Finance.* – The Capital Levy.

4. *Ideal Aim.* – The final realization of equality as the basis of the democratic State.

There is no break here with the spirit of the *Star's* Radicalism. The 'ideal aim' is the same, but there is surer insight into the means for its realization.

The result of the 1918 Election left Massingham's own ideas unaffected, but it clouded his hopes for the Labour Party. None of its intellectual leaders was returned. 'Labourism', he wrote, 'has reverted to Trade Unionism; its new policy of fusing hand-workers and brain-workers in a common organization has not matured'. His former doubts of its intellectual capacity revived as he watched the failure of these 'elderly, undistinguished Trade Union officials' to make any impression on Parliament. It was not their tepid Socialism that alarmed him, but their narrow absorption in 'the statesmanship of wage-fixing'. Between 1919 and 1922, his faith in a limited future for Liberalism revived, but he saw it now only as a useful auxiliary force to the Labour Party, 'which would give it a start in government, check its tendency to class-selfishness', and bring it a reinforcement of 'middle-class brains'. Two fears haunted him; that Labour, if it stood alone when it came to office, would not be able to cope with the House of Lords, or with some English parallel to Fascism, which he saw as a possibility of the future. For these reasons he devoted himself to advocating an electoral understanding. He saw the difficulties, however. Liberals had no policy: they would have to address themselves to 'the existing scandals of our industrialism', and to 'the cruel and anti-national treatment of the miners', they must 'negotiate with Labour the reorganization of industry'. His sympathies in the 1922 Election, when the issue, as he saw it, was foreign policy, were divided between Labour and the Free Liberals. But he realized that Liberalism was becoming steadily more 'conservative in its thinking, . . . a Whig Party without Whig ideals and Whig

courage'. 'Labour', he wrote regretfully, 'is right in scorning this shallow mood'.[1] 'If the Liberal Party decides for the Capitalist system without modification . . . the workmen and the idealists at least will have little more to say to it.'

The end came for him towards the close of 1922 with the talk of Liberal reunion. He saw that this must involve eventually the leadership of Mr. Lloyd George, an opportunism divorced from every Liberal principle, and a dependence on the Capitalist paymasters of his party. That must 'bring the mission of Liberalism to an end, and reduce its very name to contempt'.[2] He drew the conclusion swiftly: 'honest Liberals . . . will either feel that the world of politics is no place for them, or range themselves with Labour as the only party with 'a scrap of principle left'. It was characteristic of him that this personal factor was wanted to complete his alienation from Liberalism.[3] He was abnormally sensitive to character, and tended to interpret history as the interplay of personalities. A cold analytical mind, starting from his premises, would have turned long ago from Liberalism, basing itself on the argument that 'the party of the manufacturers', as Massingham himself called it, must inevitably serve the interests of Capital. What in fact affected Massingham was rather the spectacle of its leader's coarseness and cynicism when, during the miners' dispute, for example, he visibly took his cue from those interests.

The history of his breach with the *Star* was now repeated in the case of the *Nation*. He left it in April, 1923, and in the autumn joined the Labour Party.[4] In his last year of life his pen, sometimes with persuasive moderation in the *Spectator*,

[1] *Nation*, November 18, 1922.

[2] *Nation*, December 2, 1922.

[3] It would be a mistake, however, to attribute it to any instinctive antipathy to the man, for until the Marconi incident awakened his criticism, he was prodigal in his appreciation of the charm and genius of Mr. Lloyd George.

[4] 'Join the Labour Party [he wrote,] as I have joined it. It is your proper place. You will gain with it a repository for the faith that many of you have lost as members of an almost exclusively middle-class Party, in detachment from the mass of your countrymen and countrywomen. And it will find you in opportunities of work for humanity, without which faith, and the heart itself, are dead.' – *Daily Herald*, November 22, 1923.

sometimes with all his natural fire and vehemence in the *New Leader*, rendered powerful service to the Party whose principles had, in fact, though he was slow to realize it, inspired all that was most truly himself in his brave and consistent career. From first to last he served the same ideal of a humane democracy. Parties and leaders were for him but the varying tools which he took up and laid down in the effort to realize a creative design.

*

In reading over Massingham's work, a friend will notice first of all its continuity and consistency. Through these changing years, the man remained himself, stirred by the same emotions, guided by the same ideals. His powers of self-expression, on the other hand, evolved as he grew. His early work is far from revealing all the verbal skill, the dignity and breadth of phrase, and the emotional force which he developed in the maturity of his talent. His experience, especially in the writing of leading articles (the form in which, to my thinking, he did his best work), taught him to liberate his gift of strong feeling, and to communicate it, sometimes with biting irony, sometimes with direct and moving passion, to his readers. No cold intellect could have wielded the influence which he possessed. The gift to move is not a rare one among writers who are content to play upon the traditional sentiment which responds to the touch of familiar and consecrated words. His art was rather to evoke the shy impulses, the undrilled forces which obey no barrack-room words of command, the creative powers of a future still to shape. Behind this gift of emotion there was a nervous temperament, quick to feel and to suffer. He had the gift, which every good journalist must possess, of living intensely in the moment. In the act of writing his whole being was concentrated on the issue. He would discuss the issue beforehand in jerky, passionate sentences, phrased at times in language of whimsical and unprintable violence. The marvel was by what process of mental labour these hot, instinctive judgments would emerge in print in the smooth, rhythmical English of his powerful and persuasive periods. The secret of this transformation lay in something greater

than intellectual work. An abstract thinker he never was, and with all his wide reading and many-sided culture, he was neither philosopher nor economist. He had no dogmatic religious belief, and would joke in his talk as boldly as Anatole France wrote. Yet in feeling (he was, above all, a man of feeling), he never lost his inherited religious outlook. Even in the heat of party controversy, he felt the moral issue at stake, and caught a glimpse of the divine tactic in history. And so it was, alike in the last hours of vitality and in the dingy decline of English Liberalism, that this leader made history while he recorded it. With courage and his great gift of sympathy, he led his generation towards a kindlier and more sensitive society.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

This sketch owes much to the help and suggestion of Miss Gertrude M. Cross, H. W. M.'s secretary for many years on the 'Nation,' and afterwards till his death.

PEACE FOR EVER

This is the day which down the void abysm
At the earth-born's [1] spell, yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony springs,
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength,
And if, with an infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length,
These are the spells with which to re-assume
An Empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite,
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night,
To defy Power which seems omnipotent:
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, to falter, nor repent,
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free,
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

SHELLEY.

At last the blessed hour has struck which restores light and life to the earth. The War is at an end. The shadow of its immense physical suffering still broods over thousands of homes, and the darker shadow of want and of spiritual disturbance lies heavy on the soul of man and on the fabric of the State. But the gigantic sin of war, plenteously purged by the blood of innocence, is no more. For some hours now, man

[1] Prometheus, the Deliverer.

has ceased to slay his brother; for some hours he has almost ceased to hate him. There is no longer a foe to be dreaded and destroyed; there is only a human being to be succoured and fed. Thoughts of pity and of love can re-enter their long-desecrated home, and embrace not only their more familiar objects but all the world. Into that world an essentially new hope has been born. At last it is clear that peace can not only be re-established, but if man wills, and wills strong enough, need never be broken again. In this hour it is an instinct of natural horror to swear an eternal abstinence from arms. The mass of men have never looked at war through the cold formalism of a Pagan Church, still less in the savage spirit of a polluted Press. To them it has always appeared as State necessity, the decree of some hidden, unapproachable power, in the higher lights of duty or patriotism, or merely as the vague call of wildness in the blood. But never till now have they seen it panoplied in its complete armour of destruction. There is no longer any ground of compromise. They or this devil must go; either the nations will live in brotherhood, sharing the sun and its fruits, or they must tear each other to pieces in a last quarrel of the trough and the sty.

For our part, we believe that this great and generous people will put Satan behind it. It went into this War to end all wars. Scores of thousands of its sons have sealed that faith with their blood. Thousands more live to attest its virtue and avow their allegiance to the creed of Peace. Where honour calls, prudence also makes her appeal. There is nothing for it now but the League of Nations. A Balkanized Europe is as impossible as a Bolshevist one. But Balkanism will come unless a concentrated central force can be organized strong enough to put a bit in the mouth of national covetousness and to save the Continent from falling a joint prey to it and to the passionate reaction it has evoked. Who but England can save her? Straitened in its wealth and impoverished of its manhood, the country stands at the height of its glory. The last great British war has been fought and won, the Empire of Germany has followed that of Spain and France, and there are no more worlds left to conquer. If, therefore, we unarm, it is because the long day's work is done, and we can make the

wise man's gift to fortune no less than the good man's gift to God. We can build no altar to Peace on fallen pride unless we hasten to lay beside it, in willing surrender, an offering of triumphant power.

From the 'Nation' of –, but we know the date, and who can ever forget it?

NOTE

I have had to cut nearly half this thanksgiving, since it came between the Armistice and the Peace, but if I had had to cut nine-tenths of it, I would have retained the crumb that was left. Nobody, not even the soldiers, had better cause to rejoice when the hounds of hell were called off their prey, for the last two years of the War, when the spate of blood and human debris was at its worst, bruised him to the very soul. His letters are full of his despairs. 'I'm sick to the soul,' he wrote early in 1918, 'with this vile world and the life its vile rulers compel you to live. No escape; except in the Stoic's island of contempt or the saint's refuge of pity. I inhabit neither, worse luck.' In another: 'The world is lost to all immediate hope of recovery, and to those moral ideas which might save and renew it. But it has energy, and will not merely *sink* beneath its burdens, but find *some* way of bearing them.'

The parts I have cut summon the statesmen to staunch the wounds of Europe, lest it bleed slowly to death, and so of course had to go. Even so, the last portion of this invocation to a Spirit of Peace as satisfactorily violated as Cunegunde, may appear to run a bit wild in the reaction of hope from horror. But read anew the words, 'if therefore we unarm, it is because the long day's work is done' – and recollect what comes after them, not in H. W. M. but in Shakespeare. H. W. M. has, in these words, quite unconsciously emulated those discreet oracles of the ancients whose vaticinations might in the event and without loss to their reputation be taken either way.

It will, I think, surprise the reader that I have devoted such scanty space to the peace-work of a man who raised his voice

against every war waged for the last forty years. That's just the trouble: not a single one of these writings is an essay in philosophic pacifism: they pounce like a peregrine on the occasion itself. H. W. M. was a front-trench man, and so constantly baffles my attempts to put him in buckram and set him sedately on the shelf.—H.J.M.

A VISIT TO THE FRONT

WHAT is an Army? What is it made for? Most obviously for a Gargantuan consumption of work and money. Travel along the road from Calais to the Front, and for long miles your course is among the implements for filling and repairing the seeming-stable but really moving cities of men of which it is composed.[1] The fillers and repairers consist in the main of navvies, road-sweepers, drivers, chauffeurs, cyclists, carriers, engineers, fitters, carpenters, doctors, nurses, road-guides, trains of motor-lorries, wagons, carts (including hand-carts, pushed by marching soldiers), converted London 'buses (filled with cheerful choruses of pilgrims bound for 'Blighty'). The stream thickens into a block till a railhead or a roadside 'dump' relieves it, and then flows more and more lazily till it thins down from its central roar into a sort of suburban quietude, with fewer khaki figures, fewer carts and carriages, and, in their stead, groups of men standing round sky-pointing iron tubes and handling them. They are the batteries. This is the Front that is so plentifully fed; beyond is the region where trench-war goes on, and wet, tired boys live and die together in the mud. These men may lose their lives any moment. Even you, the pampered civilian, have a chance (a small one) of losing your own if you happen to be the centre of one of those two or three puffs of blue or yellow smoke that rise from the scabrous soil to right and left of you. Here are the master-workers (in no way regardful of you), and here in the air the whistle and roar of the things that they deal in. But neither there nor anywhere, save in the mind of God, is the meaning and issue of their work.

For if the first-fruits of war were to be its last, the world would not be a cheerful place to live in. Look around you. Is this a bit of France, or a little landscape in Hell? There is less to show that men have ever lived on it than in some Egyptian sandheap from which a bust of Rameses sticks out. Yet the banks of the Somme were a well-peopled district before the field-grey soldiers over the ridge settled down to their 'business' there. Now, after the toil of generations, dust has turned to dust again; not one stone stands upon another. Barely can

[1] At the rate of over 100 tons of supply per day for each division.

you trace the fast-fading chart of this vanished life. A line of powdered rubble marks the village street; that raised hump behind it was the church; a little tangle of rusty, twisted crosses still covers the sleeping-place of the dead. Nothing else remains, neither here nor a few paces farther on, where the next village began. Nature laid out this scrofulous desert in gently rounded downs, and the soil was as the soil of Sussex, alternating clay with chalk. Now, as far as the eye can carry, from ridge to ridge, along which our soldiers have crept and run, dug themselves in, and hunted their enemies out, every use of the soil that is of service to man has disappeared. A little thin grass or a few coarse weeds faintly colour the narrow strips of No Man's Land, across which the bullets flew and the bombs were thrown, and even they are broken by the soldiers' cemeteries. Otherwise an end would indeed seem to have come upon the four corners of this pleasant land. The plough cannot touch it, for it is strewn thick and deep with unexploded shells. Other than vermin, no beast can live there, for between the immense craters torn out by the explosion of the mines and the shallower shell-pits, the earth has been churned into a kind of sea, made angry by the storm that passed over it. A few splintered stumps stand in the belt of these struggles, woods no longer; they are as the stripped masts of some stranded wreck. A great belt of France and Flanders has thus been made more infertile than the waters that enclose it. No pen can picture its desolation, its hideous tint and aspect; only the memory of it will live in the shy corners of thousands of souls till death.[1]

This of the country. What of the town? The famous city of Arras was occupied for some days by the Germans. Now it lies just outside their lines, the object of a vengeance in which only a slight military object appears. It possessed about 40,000 inhabitants. Of these a few hundred linger on, risking the gas shells and shrapnel, and camped in the ample cellars with which the city is honeycombed. Its four chief glories – the great square, with its Spanish colonnade and pretty, gabled houses, of a singular delicacy of colouring and design, its modern cathedral and bishop's palace, and its richly decorated town hall, have either been utterly destroyed or reduced to skeleton

[1] 'This pock-marked land.' Lieut. Wodehouse in the *Fortnightly*.

images of their old seemliness. A cupola or two, a miniature Corinthian column, an arch, a bit of embroidery in stone, remain of the last building; something more of the others. But the town is dead. All the symbols and seats of its activities and pieties have been crushed out. Whole streets of houses have had their flanks ripped open, and their domesticities pitifully exposed. The dominant group of buildings might have furnished an observation post. But its existence is absolutely denied, nor does the need for it appear, for our line stands well above the German position. From such deeds, far more than from the most desperate encounters in battle, the bitterness of the War has sprung, and the cave-dwellers of Arras are among its embodiments. The same savage spirit seems to have been turned on the noble church of Albert, crowned by the glittering statue of the Virgin. The barracks have been spared, the church tower has been smitten; and the Virgin, stooping from her dizzy seat to the earth, her figure retained only by the iron pedestal, offers it the babe in her arms, with an almost desperate gesture of appeal. The local legend has it that when the statue falls, the German tyranny will fall too. *Ainsi soit-il.* But why limit the symbolism of the stooping Virgin? 'Take (she seems to say), oh foolish peoples, my long-proffered, long-rejected gift of Love: it is for the healing of your wounds.'

From the 'Nation' of January 20, 1917.

NOTE

The present tense is preserved for obvious reasons. The rest of the article, a quarter as long again, hoping and partly persuaded that the return of the soldiers would appease civilian hatreds and make for an enlightened and constructive peace, is omitted.

To give the reader an insight into his feelings during and immediately after the War, I quote the following passages from his correspondence: 'I shall be dull company [he is speaking of a visit he was going to pay], for the despair of things has got into my bones, and I don't see my way. In fact, I doubt the use of saying anything more, and am almost resolved to resign my editorship, and lapse into silence. It is the only word left'.

The next is in a very different vein: 'There is only one thing for me and others to do, to give ourselves up *undividedly* to the task of bringing peace back, in the only sense in which peace is thinkable, i.e. a reconciliation of enemies with enemies. In this, I feel we shall fail, we are a feeble folk; and the forces on the other side are overwhelming. But that means that the devotion must be absolute, and that the short rest of one's life must be given up to this task, in the hope that others will arise to complete it. We shall die without seeing the Land of Promise, as we deserve to do, for we have been unfaithful and feeble. But woe to us if we don't say the right word, and do the right thing. I read this extract from a book by an Austrian: "Every man is rich who still can think, talk, discuss, sleep, knowing that other men, holding their own entrails in their hands, are crawling like half-crushed worms across the furrows in the fields, and before they reach the stations for the wounded, are dying like animals". *That* is the War, not what the newspapers say'. And when the War was over: 'All over, thank God. I devote myself to the abused and cruelly entreated people, renewing my faith not before the Altar of Moloch, but of the despised and rejected Jesus, and all the other martyrs of *this* faith, of all religions and no religion, all the virtues and no virtue, all the souls of the dead, and all the desecrated bodies and polluted souls of the living'.

Unhappily, his letters most scrupulously give the day when they were written, but never by any chance the month or the year.—H.J.M.

AN OLD SERMON ON WAR

MR. JOHN DRINKWATER, having produced an excellent little war-play of his own, has just concluded at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, a very interesting production of Mr. Gilbert Murray's version of the *Troades*. It is happily possible to present this work (and all great dramatic poetry), without undue expense. The scene never changes; and a suggestion of the sea in the background, a rock or two, the ruined gates of Troy, and the smoke and flame of her burning, are the only needful accessories of the stage-picture. Thus, while the latest frippery in slang and skirts costs its thousands, a few pounds set before you the Greek poet's vision of war. Birmingham did not appear to me to be overwhelmingly concerned in it: London, I suppose, would be equally indifferent. The *Times* might devote ten lines to *The Trojan Women*, and grudge the space. But some few, with fate's charioteer hurrying by, might pause and listen, and it is for them, I suppose, that Mr. Drinkwater has revived one of the last of the great sermons to Athens which Euripides preached to her.

The Trojan Women is not Mr. Murray's greatest triumph; yet a triumph it is. The severe beauty of the Euripidean chorus expands and flowers under his touch; and thus relieves, without impeding, the march of the tragedy. Yet there is something in Euripides which is beyond poetry, and which therefore no mere 'poetic' rendering can reproduce, something so direct and natural that only the original satisfies us. This quality of Euripides is a kind of sententiousness, but goes beyond it, and in depth of feeling and simplicity of form really attains the high character of Truth. The plays abound in this plain speaking, and somehow it does not bear transplanting into an alien poetic world. Take the anti-war sentiment which (fitly enough) Euripides puts into the mouth of Cassandra, the inspired prophetess.

Mr. Murray translates:

> 'Would ye be wise, oh cities, fly from war.'

But the meaning is wider, the commandment stricter, than this. It would be nearer to say:

'Breathes there a wise man? Bid him fly from war.'

And nearer still to give a literal prose rendering. Or take the famous proverb, 'Call no man happy till he is dead'. Mr. Murray renders:

'And what so man they call
Happy, believe not, till the last day fall,'

which strikes one as too smooth for the grim verse of the original and its ironic close. I have the same feeling about Mr. Murray's setting of the closing lines, which usher in and order the women's procession to the ships. Whether they should be spoken by Talthybius, the Greek herald (which seems to me to give them the greater dramatic force), or by the Chorus, their simplicity transcends even the beautiful wreath of words that Mr. Murray lays on the tombs of the lost wanderers.

But it is ungracious to ask a great writer for more when he gives so much. In re-creating for British folk *The Trojan Women*, he revived for them one of the finest dramas ever written, if only because the poet, with a stupendous theme, does exactly what he wanted to do with it. He wanted to knock the Homeric god-worship and hero-worship into a cocked hat. He wanted to tell the Athenians, who had just done a vile thing in the sack of Melos and were going to do a mad one by launching the Sicilian Expedition, that war, successful or unsuccessful, was a series of unprofitable horrors. He sought to show that there was no 'security' in it; that it made the victors cruel because they were afraid of their victories; that it turned 'heroes' into murderers of little children; and that though the Greeks burned Troy to ashes, violated her maidens, and enslaved her queen, they could never avert her '*revanche*'. He wanted to show the 'polity' of Odysseus and the Kings sinking into a miserable war on women. To illustrate his purpose, he chose three types of feminine affliction – the outrage on Cassandra, the virgin's soul and body, the wrongs of Andromache, wife and mother, the crowning agony of Hecuba. He made Talthybius, the patriotic Greek soldier, grown ashamed of his patriotism, into the agent of these infamies. For Talthybius the glory of war had come

down to this – the slaughter of children, the harrying and forced prostitution of women. And if this was the end of the great struggle, on which all the famous Greek poetry was built, what was its beginning? A quarrel over a light woman's fancy. Euripides is fair enough in his judgment of Helen – the venomous candour of Shakespeare's Cressida is absent – but he makes Hecuba treat her with the unsparing frankness that one woman uses to another who has ruined her life. Did Euripides draw his portrait of vanity and tragic pride from his own experience? It is impossible not to think so – so life-like, so intimately studied, is the scheme of the portrait. Finally, when he comes to Menelaus, still more than half in love with his fatal Helen, he adds contempt to irony, and in that brilliant analysis of human character and motive, the implied condemnation of war – waged by such people for such motives! – gathers an impetus that carries it on to the complete catastrophe of the close. Euripides allows no alleviating agency. The gods who were for Troy, the gods who were against her, merely exhibit their impotence to moderate the play of human passion. Powerful Poseidon, clear-witted Pallas, make no figure at all, or appear only as half-remorseful apologists. Humanity must help itself, Euripides seems to say, and trust its idols no more.

Mr. Murray, with his delicate human spirit, is well able to present this picture of pathetic betrayed creatures. 'The tragedy,' he tells us in his preface to his version of the *Troades*, 'is perhaps in European literature the first great expression of the spirit of pity for mankind exalted into a moving principle.' I think it is something more. It raises the standard of revolt. Euripides overthrew the Greek Moloch and stamped on the glorious Homeric presentment of him, not because he was sorry for Hecuba (what was Hecuba to him?) but to warn Athens of what must happen to her, conquering or conquered, for all she had done in Melos and all she was going to do in Sicily. He was a realist, but, like a good many realists, he was also a reformer. I do not know whether this application was present in Mr. Drinkwater's mind when he made his Greek soldiers look exactly like 'Huns', but if the *Troades* was not a deliberate tract against war, then and thereafter, it is nothing at all. It exhibits, like nothing else in literature, the complete and

final wreck that war, pursued to its worst consequence, can make of everything human, of the nature of man, no less than of his works; of all that he loves and naturally honours, no less than of the mere luxuries and amenities of civilized living. The siege of Troy, and its sequels, were the common stock of Greek poetry, and both Æschylus and Sophocles composed more finely decorated themes upon it than their great rival. But only Euripides saw its deepest significance. Troy burning was for him the symbol of the insane destructiveness of war, as the after-lives of her conquerors were the token of its uselessness. Troy burned, as Europe burns to-day – a pleasant seat, as Euripides, in a hundred touches, contrives to tell us, of a pleasant people. Athens was a pleasanter. When Euripides wrote the *Troades* she was on her way to perdition, her Cleon having given her a rude push in that direction. She took no heed to her poet's warning; seven years passed, and he was a self-banished man. Some hundreds of years later, another Troy, unheeding a greater Prophet, went to a greater ruin. To-day, Moloch claims no single city, he wants them all.

From the 'Nation' of April 20, 1918.

NOTE

Nobody on this earth could know what H. W. M. suffered over the war, but H. W. M. himself. Only an obscure faith and a most gallant and pitiful spirit kept him going. That was the deepest bond between him and Mr. Tomlinson. They both went through hell over the war. Here is yet another passage from the correspondence: 'A shudder is the only physical reaction I can summon when I think of what these civilized peoples are doing to each other. God and His saints have left the earth. Dirty little mannikin devils inhabit it instead. Only somehow a little flame lights and re-lights again in one's heart, and keeps it alive and beating defiantly against all this absurdity and cruelty. What a world, you say! But what a chance for upsetting it all! I wish I had more years to come. But the tale gets short'.

And elsewhere: 'I regard none of these statesmen; my thought is always of their victims'.—H.J.M.

PART III: THE PRESS

ADELPHI TERRACE

BY

H. M. TOMLINSON

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I THOUGHT it might help me to say what I should like to say about my old chief, so I walked round Adelphi Terrace, near midnight, and looked up at the windows of his room, where the *Nation* used to get done. They were black. There was no light. It did not help at all.

In a house at Rollencourt in France, in the war years, the *Nation* was savaged by some of us, in public, but read with private satisfaction by others. One evening there, in February, 1917, an officer sat me beside a pinched figure in a blue-serge suit, which seemed shy among the confident uniforms, and said, 'Mr. Massingham, the editor of the *Nation*'. We tried to be polite to each other, but found hardly a word between us. He did not seem to me to be the editor of so salient a review, a publication which awed me a little then, for it was obviously aristocratic, exclusive, and jealous of things which the daily journalist regrets, regrets, that he has no time to bother about. Massingham looked, and I think he felt, uncomfortable. With a wan smile he glanced from face to face of the speakers, who did not, if I remember rightly, show any noticeable nervousness. There was no reason why we should have shown indecision. Our Department in the War was that of Intelligence; to enlighten the public; and we knew how to do it. The next day, piloted by Captain C. E. Montague – who, it ought to be said, was normally as chary with his opinions as was our visitor from the *Nation* during his brief stay – I accompanied Massingham to Pozières, through bitter north-easterly weather; and the Somme battleground always was a place to make you feel, as some one once said, that God was dead. Massingham's distress was obvious. He was horrified by that forbidding prospect with its shattering sounds. But he said nothing then, except to tell me, on our way back, that he did not know how we stood it. We were accustomed to visitors at Headquarters, some of them

important and others well known, but I don't remember one who was quite so unready as Massingham to explain just how the universe was fixed.

When I was recalled from France that spring I ceased to be a war-correspondent because Lord Northcliffe's representative on the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, so I was informed by my own newspaper, had objected to me as a 'humanitarian'. I don't know what crime that word was intended to imply, but obviously it condemned me, for there can be no answer to it in the nature of things; and as a result I went out of daily journalism to the seclusion of Adelphi Terrace, to sit in an office all day with Massingham.

I was told by one who knew my new editor that I might stay with him for six months; and for a little while I felt that the stay would be even shorter than that. But I was with him for six years, and left the *Nation* because he did. It was a little distracting, at first, to meet a journalist who was punctilious and inexorable about the very commas. Massingham never relaxed while the paper was being shaped. He could see a minor fault through a month's back numbers, and grieve over it. I have some conscience myself in these matters, but I loathed it at that time, especially in an editor. What were commas, when one could publish any romance about the sink down which young men were draining so long as the censor and the public approved? As will happen sometimes with a man in a catastrophe, the little things had passed out of my reckoning. I thought they were of no consequence. Massingham thought they were. He would have been found recorrecting proofs if the heavens had fallen, and, being shortsighted, he would have thrust the almost illegible documents at the announcing angel, unaware in his tension that it was the last day. No young poet ever searched his trial efforts for what possibly might be of dubious import more closely than my new editor scrutinized the evidence and arguments for his paper, and the form in which they were to be presented. Yet he had men about him who would have given an ordinary editor confidence in all the ease and leisure he desired, and a group of occasional reviewers and writers who appeared to think it was good fun to contribute to the *Nation* – we may name Bernard Shaw, E. M. Forster,

Bertrand Russell, and Havelock Ellis – which made my task as literary editor rather like that of a student at his lessons. Besides, we had a 'reader' in John Randall who would have put right Greek accents during a bombing raid. No need to fuss over the tidiness, polish, and readiness of a warship. And what a possession for lucky proprietors! To say they owned the *Nation*, as the King might say he had won the Derby, or an American millionaire that he possessed the finest private collection of Chinese porcelain in the world! If the *Nation* had been mine, I would not have changed it for a fleet of *Shamrocks* and the America cup. I would have valued it at more than ten new bays to a factory. There was not in the world, I used to imagine fondly, another review of quite the distinction and quality of the *Nation*; and certainly there was not one to equal it in its power to raise both furious enmity and grateful approval. But the Liberals cast Massingham because candour may be regarded as an uncomfortable shoe. A cosy notion, for there are plenty of boot-shops. But I know how the proof that he was not wanted shook him, in spite of his gay acceptance of defeat. I must be candid, too, and confess that Massingham was not an artful strategist, but an impulsive man, who, when badly stung, was likely to act without consulting his more cautious colleagues; and so, in the matter of his final severance from the *Nation*, some slight, fancied or real, following a period of cold indifference, made him rush into a position from which there could be no retreat and no rescue. But that exactly was what I had guessed would happen to him in the long run, and had cautioned him about it. He would be caught out. He was. But the *Nation* was Massingham; and I have tried to imagine the American millionaire indifferently regarding his precious porcelain as replaceable Staffordshire crocks.

His mentality was liable to the accidents, which are usually unpredictable, of a greatly energized original. It was easy to get impatient with his waywardness. But this wilful, and at times violent man, who did not know how to guard his own interests, when in the editor's chair would show a temerity so swift, and yet so justly poised, that though his decision was startling yet his manner of handling it gave entire confidence; for as soon as he began to write he was in full control, and could

guide the most dangerous matter along the edge of a declivity with not an inch to spare, even in the war years, and laugh with us over the deliberately narrow shaves. He did it as lightly as though it were comedy; but it was not comedy to Lloyd George, as the ex-Premier knows now, for he must be well aware that it was chiefly Massingham who placed him where he is and where he will remain in public opinion. What the critics meant by Massingham's pessimism in those days was his inability to gloze the certain consequences of behaviour like the Premier's, Hamar Greenwood's, and Poincaré's. Whether it was Massingham who was more nearly right about the conduct of the War, about the Peace, and about Ireland, or the polite and timid Liberals, we may now judge. Some fun has been made about the way he would set up gods, and then destroy them in sudden petulance. But at bottom Massingham was not interested in the political game, but in ethics, and his inconsistencies, which were sometimes amusing, came out of trying to see morals and politics closely related. It was out of that untrustworthy amalgam that he made his political gods. During the progress of some subtle roguery, a public man would presently seem to Massingham to have the noble qualities of Perseus, and Massingham would imagine that Andromeda was safe at last. His fury was great when he discovered that Perseus required the maiden for his own purposes. And he never learned the lesson. This pessimist never doubted that the next man, too, could be trusted to put the Commonweal above self. He used to be very droll with us over the consequences once more, and he would surrender whimsically to our cruellest banter. Then, smiling sadly, he would twitch the tip of his thin and eager nose. I have never known another man who could do that. But soon again he would begin with the assumption, though his political lore was extraordinarily wide and his memory remarkable, that the next champion was as selfless as himself, as free from vanity, and as sincere; because Massingham passionately desired the perfect State; and to admit that politicians were imperfect would have been to admit that we shall never be nearer to the New Jerusalem than somewhere about Wigan. Massingham knew this was true, and that he ought to admit it, yet inconclusively and even

fiercely refused to admit it. No wonder one modern journalist, speaking generously of my old editor after his death, discovered that he was a journalist of the 'old-fashioned sort, now almost extinct'. Why 'almost'? But of course. He was the incorrigible satirist who in other times would have been exiled, burned, or imprisoned; and in our own day of publicity machinery run for caucuses it is clear that he would not succeed at pulling the right ropes so well as some others. He was a righteous man, but thought he was a politician, and so, troubled by injustice in a careless world, and deluded by the hope that primary instincts may be changed by reasoning, he was apt to see everywhere his abstract principles in active trousers.

Moreover, he expected his staff to be as fearless as he was himself. Just as he had gone for a holiday one year the great railway strike fell across our communications, and he was separated, somewhere in Wales, from his baggage. He telegraphed to me vividly emphatic instructions about the line the *Nation* was to take over this strike; but I guessed what kind of information he had been reading in Cardiff, and did the opposite thing. When he came back to London he thanked me for 'putting the telescope to my blind eye'. In fact, a chief so inspiriting, so quick to appreciate the significant trifle, so sure to understand one's faintest doubt, so well able to guess the unsaid word and to account for it, who could be so frankly abusive over inferior work and cut the heart out of the manuscript of a close friend, and yet never fail to say the just word whenever an obscure contributor pleased him, was not the editor who could be allowed to walk into the street alone. When he went, that finished it. There was nothing left.

He did not want to go. The *Nation* was his creation, but he had to leave it as though it were a grocer's shop and he was the retiring manager. His jokes about it were outrageous. But he was badly wounded, for he was as tender-hearted as a sentimental girl. His literary predilections showed that. He keenly relished *Don Juan* and *Gulliver's Travels*. They just suited his steely and ironical mind. But he was also deeply moved by *The Story of an African Farm*, and thought it was great literature. He was, for another instance, convinced of the genuine nature of the tears in the eyes of Sir William Orpen's portrait of a

beautiful *Refugee*, though I pointed out to him that Orpen was not painting in France when the refugees were about, and that I suspected the girl was the popular cashier at a hotel frequented by officers at Cassel. But no; those tears touched his heart. He flew to arms in their defence. His fun could be Rabelaisian, but he was like a nun over forlorn and pitiable souls. It wasn't safe to leave him about with the uplifted eyes of affliction. And, naturally, he was instantly responsive to the human appeal even of an opponent. It was a good thing that his reputation for 'bitterness' and for 'pessimism' disguised this fact. It was assumed that he was hard, bright, and ruthless. But one morning, after his severance was announced, I went into his room, and he stood at his desk brooding. There were tears in his eyes. 'Read that,' he said, fiercely thrusting a letter at me. It was from J. L. Garvin. 'I've spent my life for the Liberals, and here we are, and they don't care. But *that* man,' he said, pointing to Garvin's letter, 'I've gone out of my way to mock.'

Probably a feeling of sudden loneliness was part of the impulse which prompted Garvin's letter to Massingham. But that is not my business. Anyhow, he also is of the 'old school, now almost extinct'. But try to imagine the Conservative Party imploring for the removal of Garvin! The Tories know they must put up with him. They may dislike him sometimes, but some sound instinct tells them that they are improved by the aid of scholarship, and convictions strong enough to face the opposition of friends; in short, by an original genius in the editing of an organ of their party. The Tories are not so confident that the Lovat Frazers and his kind do their affairs much good. Imagine Northcliffe and the Tories with a Massingham on their side! Would they have let him go? Would they have worried because he was inclined to tell a Premier that the atrocities of Black-and-Tannery were best left to the Liberals? Would they have deprived him of his pulpit because he was willing and able at times to make a Ministry fear lest his bright quality should show their inconsistencies in a ridiculous light? The fact that a Minister had paused to wonder whether the *Daily Mail* had really noticed what he had done would not have worried Northcliffe to the point of discharging the journalist

who had so easily drawn the eyes of the public. Tory newspaper proprietors are not like that. They know they cannot afford to be. It is only the Liberal Party, as the last election made quite clear, which can afford to dispense with the services of men like Massingham, Spender, and Gardiner.

Yet that matters very little, perhaps. At the time, standing close to a lovable man in his defeat, whose life had been devoted to the service of his fellows, and who had cared for the consequences of bleak and exposed courage as little as good men usually care, and against whom there was nothing but that he had done well enough to evoke the enmity of important public servants who were not too anxious to have their talents counted, one grew angry and bitter. Yet that was absurd. What else should we have expected? What else has ever happened to such men? Men who live by such a rare light know well enough to what it will lead them, and can look at their fate more calmly than those who are with them, for they have always known what the end would be.

H. M. TOMLINSON

THE PRESS AND THE PEOPLE[1]

THOSE of us who have arrived at middle age must be conscious of many remarkable changes in the society in which their lives are passed, none more remarkable than that which has come over the institution known as the Newspaper Press. We were accustomed to think and speak of the journalism of our youth as a pretty big affair, destined, with the invention of the rotary press, to grow much bigger. But we must confess that in our wildest imagination we never conceived that in thirty or forty years this well-grown child would develop into a giant whose limbs bestride the globe. Yet so it is. Probably one of our great syndicated firms could to-day print all the newspapers that were in existence when I was a boy without even bringing the whole of their gigantic machines into play.

That is a great transformation in the bulk of newspaper production. But a still greater change has taken place in the scope and character of the journalist's activities. The journal of the middle of last century was a luxury; its successor of the twentieth is a necessity. Science and industry have so remade the world that it can no more do without newspapers than without railways. Without newspapers of the modern type, and a good many of them, policies could not be announced and maintained; wars run; peace preserved; elections fought; stocks and shares bought and sold; companies find investors; shops customers; theatres, cinemas and concert-rooms audiences; ships and railways travellers; schools, teachers and pupils; churches, ministers and congregations; and statesmen people to vote for them.

This new journalism of ours is of all types and categories. One form is devoted almost exclusively to women's interests, dress and pleasures, and to the tradesmen and *entrepreneurs* who cater for them. From these traders, whose interests are bound up with their own, its proprietors largely draw

[1] A paper prepared, at the request of leading Co-operators, for the Co-operative Congress at Nottingham, at Whitsun, 1924. H.W.M. was, however, unable to attend the Congress, and the paper was published in the *Co-operative News* of June 28 and July 5 and 12, 1924.

the advertisement revenues on which they depend. Another is for schoolboys and schoolgirls, and is read only by them. A third kind deals with nothing but sport, and claims millions of readers a day; a fourth gathers untold wealth by representing this or that trade or profession; while a fifth, with weekly issues reckoned by hundreds of thousands, concerns itself with printing fiction of the sentimental or sensational or criminal type. In fact, it may be conjectured that as in my youth scores of thousands of British people existed who had either never read a newspaper, or whose reading was confined to a single weekly journal, there are now many more thousands whose knowledge of the world, outside their own immediate concerns, is wholly or mainly derived from the reading of the daily, weekly, or Sunday paper. The newspaper, in a word, is their continuation school, which, in exchange for a fee of a few pence a week, introduces them to new ideas in politics, art, religion, literature, to the discoveries of science, stories of adventure, the lives of unknown and distant peoples, even the appearance of the men and women who compose them. The cause of this change is a very simple one. Popular education brought with it a comparatively new power into the world – the power to read. And on that power the Newspaper Press has founded a dominion such as neither our society nor any other has ever known.

Now if this world of ours has grown to be a newspaper-governed world, it is important for us all to know who rules this mighty kingdom, and how. Most of the conductors and writers of the earlier type of newspaper were pretty well known. I put a few names together, almost at random, as representing both these types of journalist: Dickens, Thackeray, Leigh Hunt, Tom Hood, the Jerrolds, Justin McCarthy, Thomas Davis, Feargus O'Connor, Sala, Labouchere, Yates, Delane, John Morley, Richard Holt Hutton, Frederick Greenwood, Algernon Borthwick, H. M. Hyndman, and W. T. Stead; and, among the great newspaper-owning families, the Walters, the Lawsons, and the Lloyds. I might almost add Bright and Cobden, for they were closely associated with the journalism of their day. Nearly all these men might be called great. They were heroes of politics, social reformers, writers of world-

wide fame, or journalists eminent for knowledge of their craft. But almost the first discovery we make about the new rulers of the Newspaper Press is that they are very few, and that they are mostly obscure men, unknown for any achievement in literature or politics. When the *Daily Mail* Trust made its appeal to the world last year, it declared a circulation of the newspapers comprised in it among thirteen million readers; and when the Berry Trust – *Allied Newspapers* – followed suit, it announced a weekly circulation of over eight millions. Now, if you took the trouble to examine the directing boards of the various newspapers comprised in such groups as the *Associated Newspapers* or the *Sunday Pictorial Newspapers*, you would find them to be composed of gentlemen of whom you knew nothing whatever, and in whom, possibly, you would feel no sort of interest if you did. The names of the few men – Lord Rothermere, Lord Beaverbrook, and Sir William Berry – in whom is vested the power of directing these vast concerns, are certainly familiar sounds in your ears. But of their opinions on politics and government, or of the gifts which qualify them to act as spiritual directors to millions of their fellow-countrymen, young and old, you know as much as I do – and that is just nothing at all. Some of them have seats in the House of Lords, but there, unfortunately, though their mouths may be ready to drop pearls of wisdom, they never open them.

Nor, I think, would any of these great newspaper magnates describe their newspapers as journals of policy or of opinion. They are quite frankly organs of business, supplying the wares they think their customers want, and changing them whenever a new demand arises. 'You left journalism a profession,' said Mr. Kennedy Jones, one of the founders of the *Daily Mail*, to Lord Morley; 'we have made it a branch of commerce.' And in his book on journalism Mr. Jones proceeded to describe the kind of commerce he had in mind. 'What sells a newspaper?' he asked. And his answer was 'First, war; secondly, a State funeral; and thirdly, a first-class murder'. Or take Mr. Jones's great partner, Lord Northcliffe. A friend of Lord Northcliffe once reproached him with his method of conducting the *Daily Mail* during the Boer War.

Lord Northcliffe promptly replied: 'Prove to me that two-thirds of England is pro-Boer, and I'll make the *Daily Mail* a pro-Boer newspaper to-morrow'.

It may well be asked, what quarrel have you or I with this 'business' journalism, which does no more than cater for popular tastes as they exist, and whose immense success is a proof of its necessity and usefulness. It deals with gossip, sport, crime, and the doings of what is called 'society'. But are not people interested in royalty, in sensational trials, in the life of their neighbours, especially of their rich neighbours, and are not nine out of ten Englishmen devoted to sport? These papers are written to amuse, and they do amuse.

This is, in fact, the defence of the new kind of journalism which the late Mr. Kennedy Jones was accustomed to make. 'A new class of readers,' he says,[1] 'had come into existence as a result of the Education Act of 1870. They were the children, the grandchildren, and the great-grandchildren, of people accustomed to public hangings, public whippings, pillories, ducking-stools, stocks. Was the taste engendered by such sights during the centuries to be outbred by the cheap schooling of a single generation?'

Obviously, if Mr. Jones is right, and the taste of the people really calls for a crime-soaked journalism, profiteering in war and brutality, and will endure no other, you and I must give up our hopes of democracy, or content ourselves with a very modest instalment of them. But Mr. Jones was *not* right. And if there is a bad journalism, there is also a good. If there is a *News of the World*, there is also a *Manchester Guardian*. What is more satisfactory still is that the good journalistic coin is beginning to drive out the bad. Only a few months ago the *Times* was rescued from the Northcliffe group, and re-converted into a serious newspaper.

Or let us look a little further afield. America was the parent of our sensational journalism; Lord Northcliffe (a very clever and observant man) went to school to the commoner kind of American newspaper long before he introduced it here. There are hideous blots on the Newspaper Press of the United States. If you want to know what a good deal of it is like, read that

[1] In *Fleet Street and Downing Street.*

book with a terrible title and a terrible meaning – I refer to Mr. Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check*. Still, American journalism is changing. Take an example. To-day, one of the best-informed and most authoritative journals in the United States is the *Christian Science Monitor*. This journal is not, as you might suppose, a purely denominational paper, except in the sense that it is owned and published by the Christian Science Publishing Society, and that a certain portion of its space – not a large one – is devoted to an article on Christian Science. In the sense indeed in which it is the organ of a community with a common habit of thought, a consistent view of life, it may be called a co-operative, though not a vocational, newspaper. But it has a range of contents almost as varied as that of the great papers of New York, or Boston, or Chicago, and its standard of journalism is much higher.

Further, the *Christian Science Monitor* is produced, not for profit, but for the benefit and interest of its readers. With that object, it gives no descriptions of death, or crime, or scandal. It simply leaves the destructive activities of men out of account, so as to have space to concentrate on the constructive ones.

Now, it seems reasonable to hope that what America can do, we can do too. But there are difficulties. One of the sources of the power of the syndicated press is that its vast resources are employed on so large a scale, its allied companies produce so much of the material it requires, and it can effect such large economies of management, as almost to drive the single newspaper to the wall. I was speaking the other day to one of the ablest Capitalists in England, a director of a powerful and highly profitable group of illustrated papers. 'I regard,' he said, 'the day of the single daily paper as over. It costs far too much to produce and maintain. No journal on the scale of the *Times* or the *Telegraph* will ever again be started in England, or, if it is, it will certainly fail.'

But I think my Capitalist friend overlooked one condition of newspaper production, of which the example of the *Christian Science Monitor*, no less than your own project, has reminded me. Suppose that a great body of citizens, united in opinion, or engaged together in some special enterprise which they desire to popularize and extend, find their way blocked by a

journalism existing only for profit, chiefly concerned for the great capitalist system, and colouring or suggesting facts to suit it, in which no fine idea, no serious purpose, no continuous thought, can live, and which, while it forms the mental habits of the people, debases their minds or continually distracts them. Must such a body be content to leave this journalism in possession of the minds of the people, and see them sink by degrees, as the Romans sank, into listless, demoralized city crowds, soaking their minds in crime stories, spotting 'winners' that seldom win, seeing games they never play at, and gaping at the antics of the idle rich? For myself, I see no reason to fear the failure of a newspaper of high character and ability resolutely supported by a great and highly organized public deeply interested in its success.

It may be said that the co-operative principle is unsuited to the ownership and production of newspapers. But it happens to be extremely alive in the newspaper world of to-day, and to have been applied to very different types of journalism. Thus, the French paper, *L'Humanité*, which was for some years under Jaurès, its first and greatest conductor, the most brilliantly written newspaper in France, was founded by thousands of Frenchmen who subscribed their 25 or 50 francs to maintain an organ of Socialist opinion. And to-day[1] the French daily paper called the *Quotidien* proudly announces its 40,000 proprietor-subscribers.

Now, it is not necessary to go so far afield as France for an example of co-operative ownership in newspapers. Our own *British Medical Journal* is such a paper. This famous journal is the property of the British Medical Association, and is its organ, and as that society exists 'to promote the medical and allied sciences, and to maintain the honour and interests of the medical profession', so the *British Medical Journal* devotes itself to these allied objects. Finally, there is the *Spectator*, the oldest and most famous of our weekly critical papers. The *Spectator* has recently adopted the principle of life subscriptions. It involves no right of proprietorship or control of policy, but the life member is admitted to an annual meeting, and may make suggestions at it regarding the conduct of the paper.

[1] *April*, 1924.

Thus it will be seen that not only is it possible and practical to start and maintain a journal representing primarily a party, or a great calling, or a religious creed, or an important body of consumers, but to make it a real power in journalism and affairs. A vocational Press you must have, for without it, as Mr. Bertrand Russell says,[1] a vocational organization cannot live. Its ideas will not be explained by the popular Press, nor its work reported and made interesting.

Indeed, it is in this matter of reporting that the most serious ground of quarrel arises between the public and the sensational journalist. When the facts do not suit his book, he can distort or mutilate them; or he can ignore them, hiding them away in small print and out-of-the-way corners; when he thinks them dangerous he can kill them with a headline or a cartoon, or some cheap personality. So that the people may have issue after issue presented, and rarely a truthful statement or a serious argument on any one of them, till the newspaper becomes a machine for keeping popular thought at a low level, and the state of the Press here, as in America, is such as to invite, in Upton Sinclair's words, 'every lover of truth and fair dealing to get busy and help create an open forum through which the people may get the truth about their affairs, and be able to settle their industrial problems without bloodshed and waste'.

Now truth and fair dealing, and peace – national and industrial – are not merely ideals for such a society as ours, they are necessities. But a purely commercial Press is, and must be, an anti-social thing. It wants war because war sells papers; it wants crime because crime sells papers; it wants all forms of exciting amusement because exciting amusement sells papers; in particular, it wants gambling, because gamblers buy papers, and journalism makes gamblers of women and children as well as of a large proportion of the men of our nation. And it wants industrial society to remain pretty much as it is, or, if possible, to come more and more under the power of Capital, because its revenues and personal interests are rooted in the Capitalist system and its conductors believe in no other.

[1] See *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*. By Bertrand and Dora Russell. (Allen and Unwin.)

But you want none of these things. You want peace. You want to see the rule of international force giving way to the rule of international law; you want education, and more of it, and, above all, a better kind of education, so that your children may grow up to hate war and escape the barbarism which threatens to destroy the world like a second Flood.

I have always thought, and I think still, that the Press which created these dangers will also open a door of escape from them. Not, of course, the Press of to-day. But the Press can be changed, just as the mediæval Church was changed by a handful of monks and men of letters determined that abuses should cease. Only, to be able to reform the newspaper of to-day, you must understand it, and even learn from it. If the co-operative paper of the future is to find readers and keep them, it will have to take account of the great mechanical efficiency of the capitalist newspaper – its incredibly rapid production, its highly organized distributing services, its attractive make-up, its skill in presenting a bird's-eye view of the day's events, and in emphasizing, with pen and picture, their most important or exciting feature. Above all, there is its power of suggestion. The popular Press of to-day makes its readers read what it wants them to read. It even makes them think what it wants them to think. And within limits this art is legitimate, and even indispensable. If an editor reasons fairly, he has a right to ask his readers to agree with him. If he gives the facts on both sides, he is entitled to draw his own conclusions from them.

While, therefore, your paper should be at once alive, attractive, and as fair as possible, it should, I suggest, be written to persuade and to convert. And for that purpose it must also be better written – it could easily be that – than the average popular newspaper. One reasoned article, as clear and concise, above all as informative, as the editor could make it, on the first topic of the day, should suffice. You would then put at his disposal, say, two-thirds of the space which the popular Press devotes to royalty, sport, gossip, crime, and gambling, for the use of the gentleman whom I would call the Real News Editor. This would enable you not only to have ample news of the Co-operative Movement, and to beat all

your rivals – as the *Manchester Guardian* now beats them – in presenting events, revealing their causes, and describing the actors in them, but also to give your readers each day a brief guide to the best books issued, the best plays or the best music to be heard, the best pictures to be seen, and to explain in clear, untechnical terms the most important advances or discoveries in industry or science.

Nor, to achieve this everyday picture of the world in which thought and feeling are alive, is it in the least necessary to take a kill-joy view of life, to frown on amusement – though the papers now give us a great deal too much of it – or to cultivate a dull, prosy journalism. I was going to say that there was only one necessary art in journalism – the art of telling a story in clear, simple English – and only one indispensable man on a newspaper staff, and that is an inspired news editor. But it should also be possible to station in each European capital, and in the great centres of industry in America and the Dominions, a skilled and honest journalist, with instructions to keep his eye not merely on the things that other papers reveal, but on those they habitually hide or slur over, and to report them without exaggeration and without fear. From such an adventure might develop an International News Bureau, feeding your own paper and representatives of the Socialist, or Labour, or Radical Press through an organization stretching from country to country, and ultimately from continent to continent.

One thing I would respectfully urge. If you keep your paper good, you do not want to make it too large. Avoid the nuisance and the unnecessary cost of the monster newspaper. Size is no guide to value. These enormous papers give a great impression of space and variety and enterprise; in reality, they are little more than huge advertisement sheets. I often think that journalism in England was at its greatest when its form was the simplest, and that the day of the pamphleteer was also the day of the truly great editor.

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Have faith, therefore, in what the future will bring. It is quite possible that the mere news-sheet will die, and that the wire-

less service will some day give us all the truth and all the lies we can swallow with our morning or our evening cup of tea. But it is not in the nature of things that the power of writing – the intercommunication of mind with mind – should perish, or that it should always be abused as it is abused to-day. Human values fall, but they also rise, and it is on this power of moral recovery that the hopes of such a society as yours are fixed.

'The time may come,' said a great writer and lover of humanity,[1] born in our age and a witness of much of its evil, 'the time may come when even men of the world, those who live in the present, who labour not for the future nor learn from the past, will recognize that man is a complex creature, and that material wealth satisfies only a moiety of his nature, and that material goods possessed in excess by one portion of a community and lacking wholly to the other mean a condition of disease . . . that the railway train which brings the prostitute, the stock exchange, and the foes to the freedom of a people into the heart of its land had better for humanity have been the slowest ox-wagon crawling across the plains . . . that a submarine cable, used to whisper from land to land, and stir up the hearts of people against people, and to urge on the powerful against the weak is the devil's own tube, and has a connection direct with hell; that a daily paper not based on a determination to disseminate truth is a cup of poison sent round fresh every morning to debilitate the life of the people.'

From the 'Co-operative News' of June 28 *and July* 5 *and* 12, 1924.

NOTE

After much havering, wavering and wandering among the mass of a great journalist's writings, spread over more than twenty years, about his own profession, I have finally chosen this address, written in the last year of his life, as the most truly representative of his critical and constructive position combined. The reader may object that it is a lecture, that it is cut to the measure of an audience with particular views and

[1] Olive Schreiner, in her *Thoughts on South Africa*. (Fisher Unwin.)

expectations, and that its appeal was not aimed at the wider and perhaps better informed public for which he usually wrote. These objections occurred to me before I had read it, to be dissipated when I had read it. In the first place, this address was written as it stands (I have only deleted a few topical references) before it was delivered, as, owing to illness, it never was. And is an address of this kind necessarily inferior and of less permanent value than a criticism, written purely for the profit of intellectuals? It may or may not be, but in this case a comparison with his less relative views upon the modern press says No, and my father, who travelled over most of his older material before writing it, evidently thought No. Secondly, the audience for which he wrote represented a set of valuations and attitudes which, at the end of his life, had captured his full spiritual loyalty. I do not mean that he had evolved a cut-and-dried Socialism of ends and means: he certainly never had, for his was the province of ideas, not of practical administration. But he saw in the Labour movement the one hope not merely of a regenerated society but of rescue from the collapse of civilization, and accordingly wrote his lecture with a fresh and vivid stimulus behind it. Thirdly, he was led by the exigencies of this special case to sharpen his wonderful power of clear, forcible and beautifully ordered exposition to its highest capacity, with a result that all readers can see for themselves.

Lastly, the piece I have chosen has this advantage over others of a similar direction. It is more optimistic than they are, and I think that the main reason for this is that it was not until he had left the *Nation* that he became certain in his own mind as to whether the Northcliffe and its legacy the Rothermere Press was or was not the reflection of a public demand. But his final view was that the supply created the demand, and that the worser aspects of 'business' journalism did not so much satisfy a need as nurture an artificial want. It must be remembered that H. W. M. was first and last a practical journalist, a supreme journalist, a journalist who could outwit the trickiest of them at his own game, but whose quickness of apprehension, fecundity of expression, instant grasp of a situation and power of making it tell its story with

the fullest dramatic effects – were utterly free of vulgarity, shoddiness, and subservience to mean or self-interested ends. Even in his private life he was still the journalist, and I honestly do not think that anything greatly concerned or affected him, except in so far as it was part of his journalism, or he could make it so. But then consider what he *did* make part of his journalism, how it embraced art and letters and religion, the purest idealism and crusading zeal. But a theorist, a philosopher, a thinker in the abstract, one who brooded upon the mystery of life or lived out of his age in contemplation of what used to be called the 'eternal verities', a mystic or communicant he certainly was not. Or if he was one or all of these things – for he was a very shy and secretive man and revealed his essential self neither to man nor woman – it was in the spirit of a journalist, or rather of journalism as he conceived and made it, in which 'he nothing common did or mean'.

In the last period of his life, and especially after he lost the *Nation* and took to free-lancing, he became exceeding weary of journalism, while bad health, and dislike of the 'ethos' of the *New Statesman*, whither he transferred his 'Wayfarer', accentuated the reactions of revolt. Yet I doubt whether he would ever have found peace in book-writing, and if he had lived another twenty years, he would still only have left his journalist's pen for the grave. Here are two passages on his journalism from the private letters: 'I'm really sick of journalism and long to retire on my great work on the Second Coming, which would be of a profanity to make you lower your eyes as you passed me on the other side of the street. I wish (for Harold's sake) that I had been born a bird; but having been early drawn into this accursed Hell of journalism, I seem to go round and round the circle, and always to be touching its fiery walls'.

'Somehow, journalism tires me nowadays: my mind is often far away. I think different ways are wanted; but though I explore the paths mentally, I don't find it. I should like to clear my soul of all that has filled it, and look to the bottom of the cup.'—H.J.M.

VALE

THE present number of the *Nation and the Athenæum* is the last for which the company of journalists who founded it more than sixteen years ago, with their more recent associates, will be responsible. So long an association would seem to excuse, or even to warrant, a word of parting. During the entire period of its existence the *Nation* has remained an independent paper, a journal 'of the Opposition'. The problems of the Great War, and of the years of its preparation, no less than the state of art and letters, and the reflections of these activities on the faith and practice of our times, have seemed to us to call less for the acceptance of existing standards than for a candid examination of them. In fact, the life of the *Nation* has hung upon three capital issues, on each of which it has offered an individual opinion. So long as the European War was avoidable, we endeavoured to avoid it. From the hour when it had become an outrage on humanity, we strove to end it by a peace of negotiation. And when it died of defeat and exhaustion, we pleaded for a settlement in harmony with the professions of all its combatants, and reconcilable with their religion and their ideas of the civilized order. These efforts failed. They could not, in fact, have succeeded save by a *plébiscite* of the armies, or, in the alternative, by a miraculous enlightenment of the statesmen of the peoples who knew not what they did or whither they were being led. He who sows seed in the minds of men must have the eye of a hawk to see where it falls, and the vision of a god to discern whether its fruit be good or evil. But of the words we addressed to the readers of the *Nation* from 1907 to 1919, we wish only those unsaid which faltered in their plea for peace, or left the pith and marrow of their message undelivered.

The second subject-matter of the *Nation* has been closely akin to the first. That is the social question. The Great War was the child of a Greater and a Longer War, and from its womb has sprung, in premature delivery, the Social Revolution. We have not always found it possible to treat this problem adequately within the strict lines of Liberal doctrine. But we have endeavoured to apply to it the spirit of Liberalism, which is,

we think, a larger and a more fruitful thing. By itself and within itself, the existing Liberal Party, cruelly shocked and acutely divided by the War, lacks the power to resolve the great dilemma of modern statesmanship. That is – how to revise the industrial contract without destroying it? So far as Liberalism is an invitation to freedom of the mind, to toleration, to the enrichment of personality, to the search for diversity in the social structure and in the intellectual conception of the State, it remains an element of value in the work of reconstruction. But to the extent to which it ceases to be a mass-force in our political life, it must be content to cede to the Labour Party a large share of the promise of the future. The two forces need not antagonize each other, and should only do so if the Liberal Party fail to measure the industrial crisis, or to seize its true character, or if the workers use their political power, as the Bolshevists have done, to enforce an unmixed collectivist solution. But there is a sense in which the rule of pure Capitalism is no longer on its trial. It has been morally judged, and in the light of that judgment progressive editors and writers will have to walk if they would survive as directors, or even as interpreters, of their age. Our successors in the conduct of the *Nation* will state their own views. We have stated ours, familiar as they must be to the unseen companions of sixteen years of labour, as the *envoi* of an affectionate farewell.

From the 'Nation' of April 28, 1923.

NOTE

The few remaining independent editors of independent journals – such as Mr. St. Loe Strachey of the *Spectator* and Mr. Garvin of the *Observer* – were aware, when they sounded the lament, that they were witnessing not merely the abdication of a great figure, but the end of a period in which they were the sole survivors.

Here are comments from the private letters on the loss (personal and national) of the *Nation*, which, of course, was occasioned by his attitude to Labour:

'The *Nation* episode is over; nothing lasts, and the thing is to strike camp when the mind is still unstiffened and ready for a new start. I hope this is so with me.'

'I've put the past totally behind me, and would not renew it if I could. The press has been most kind, and I've been deluged with letters, saying (and for this I *do* thank the gods) that the writers have been moved to some kind of activity in work and thought by what they have read in the *Nation*. Much of it has been badly done, as I know too well; but if now and then a chord has been struck, that is all that a man should expect or desire.'

'New woods invite me. New ventures. New thoughts.'

These touching extracts surely reflect the quite extraordinary buoyancy of his mind, as a mort of laborious commentary could never do. For I am pretty sure that the loss of the *Nation* was his death-blow, and this is how he meets it! He was stricken – and he writes like the young D'Artagnan off on a new adventure, not like a veteran elbowed out of his command in the only war worth fighting.—H.J.M.

STEAD

STEAD's personality deserves to be sympathetically described, for it was fine and uncommon, but the writer should be in some detachment from it. Few daughters could so deal with such a father, and Miss Estelle Stead [1] makes no pretence to criticism. She records her own affectionate loyalty, and throws into the front of her picture that part of Stead's career which she best understood. This was his researches into spiritualism. Miss Stead thought them pregnant of truth and discovery. They were at least extremely characteristic. But they seemed to many of his friends to rob his career of its earlier measure of brilliant activity, and to be one powerful cause of its decline in authority and repute. What did he gain? Spiritual things are spiritually discerned; but Stead sought them through a material, pseudo-scientific medium, erratic in its results, as he himself admitted, and soaked with imposture. He was easily persuaded of things he wished to believe; and here was a form of intellectual search where a wise scepticism was forbidden by its votaries and yet was essential to truth, a dark path where he who went slowly went well. Stead's ardour of temperament and journalist's passion for quick returns pushed him on where impulse was only too willing to tread. He gave time, money, health, enthusiasm, to the quest, and in return he got – himself. His Gladstone, his Manning, his Julia, were all Steads. They all wrote leading articles; they all showed his peculiar mixture of *naïveté* and shrewdness. What need of automatic writing, of crystal-gazing, of 'psychics' and mediums, and a 'bureau of communication' (what a Steadian phrase!) between the visible and the invisible, to produce a pathetic iteration of the *Review of Reviews*? The keeper of this strange shop for the sale of spirits, good and bad, should have taken the warning of one of his 'high' visitants:

'You seek for visions which the saints have enjoyed. You can have them as they had, by living the life of the spirit, and cultivating the calm, meditative mood.'

[1] *My Father: Personal and Spiritual Reminiscences.* By Estelle Stead. (Heinemann.)

Precisely so. Instead of 'writing' *Julia*, Stead should have read Wordsworth and à Kempis.

But, indeed, Stead was a bigger man than can be gathered from this hotch-potch of 'premonitions' which were never fulfilled, and 'spooks' who talked like poor Poll. His chief service was not, as he thought, to the science of 'borderland', or perhaps even to social purity, or to international peace. For great work he was a too hasty, too impressionable man. His moral world was made from the creaking joists and job fittings of the platform. He thought (with some truth) that the modern newspaper was very like a pulpit, but his gospel of sensationalism wore thin before the larger facts of life. His real service – and it was a great one – was the life his wonderful personality gave to the whole business of journalism; his re-discovery of its power, and the rich equipment of energy, self-confidence, and fresh interest in life, which he brought to it. His force was the more wonderful as it was so slightly trained. Stead educated himself as he went along, by his eyes, by his pen, working through the fertility and facility of his mind. He lived for the hour, and filled it, not only with a splendid helpfulness to others, but with the work of ten average men. He had a kind of agility which kept him leaping from one crest of experience to another. Second-best, in a real sense, he was. His mind was unprovided with a critical sieve; all went through it – philanthropies and prejudices, ideas and 'fads', happy thoughts and crudities, short cuts to great things. He cherished fine Quixotries, but he had an easy throw-back to conventional thought, so that almost before his ears were closed to a psalm of international peace, they were open to the grinding of 'Two Keels to One'. Thus Stead was always something of a self-defeated man. His journalism could run on a strain of a pure and – considering the consequences to himself – an exalted idealism, and then beat out any sentimental tune; could rage against one 'bloody Sunday' in Trafalgar Square and excuse another in Moscow; and in South Africa could water the tree and curse its fruit. What a feat to send Gordon to Khartoum, and to force Gladstone to dispatch a British army to rescue him! And what folly! How splendidly futile to tramp Europe for peace, and waste one of the best tongues

in Europe on a feeble little Tsar! For Stead, with a sound personal judgment for others, often wanted wisdom for himself, or, when he sought it, desired it at heart less than the *éclat* of his calling. He was credulous; a glorious advocate of some extremely queer clients. He was vain, and his zeal for journalism pricked him on to advance and almost to sustain some impossible claims for it. But he was no devouring egoist, and if he was driven on to at least one act of vindictiveness, he was, among many public men I have known, the kindest and most helpful. Often as he must have been used and preyed on by the undeserving, he did not let these deceptions dull his warm-heartedness, or restrict his charities. In this regard he was a Christian man; and his lifelong patronage of his 'Senior Partner' was neither lip-service, nor a Pharasaic pretence, nor, to a man of his Puritan upbringing, a conscious irreverence. Early in life he had dubbed himself Knight of the Holy Ghost; and though, like all of us, he coarsened and weakened under the fever of his daily business, this self-dedication saved him from many of its stains. In his practice as an editor and the conductor of an office, he was a devoted friend of women; and he did more than any contemporary journalist to give them their true place in society.

Of journalism Stead was indeed a Prince. His range was limited. Of art he knew nothing, and in literature his taste for the commonplace – for the didactic writers instead of for the greater poets and thinkers – impoverished his style and reduced it to a kind of daring obviousness. His service, therefore, was personal rather than intellectual. He restored self-respect and self-belief to his craft, he opened to it the world of adventure, of reliance on individual force and will; and if he saw it fall under the stroke of the proprietor-manager, he did not fall with it. His two complacent Tsars a little overbalanced him; but he was no snob, and for years after he had climbed to the council-rooms of the great, and had toppled one or two of them over, he lacked, I think, a dress-coat. His most curious, and indeed most touching, friendship was with Rhodes. The two men had points of resemblance. Both were rather slovenly dreamers; Rhodes indeed, though he could quickly realize his appetites, could never visualize his ideas. Miss Stead, in a

chapter of great interest, records her father's complete conquest of Rhodes's loose imagination and wayward affections; and of the way in which the two men combined in a scheme of 'underpinning the Empire' by a Society which would be to the Empire what the Society of Jesus was to the Papacy. So entire was Rhodes's confidence in his friend's conception of Imperial Jesuitry, that at one time, in Stead's words, he had left 'the whole of his real and personal estate to 'X' and W. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews*'. The plan grew by degrees more practical, and finally took an educational shape; while Stead's attacks on the South African War cost him the management of a vast fortune and the loss of a most surprising stewardship. It made some difference to him. With small personal wants, Stead was a royal spendthrift; and Rhodes's millions might have gilded his sumptuous vision of a great Shrine of Journalism. But there Stead's error was vital. Journalism, as his own experience should have taught him, is no Temple of Justice. It is rather a Cave of All the Winds; and it was Stead's fortune to make its hollows ring with a tremendous and inspiring blast.

From the 'Nation' of October 4, 1913.

PART FOUR: MEN OF LETTERS

HIS SENSE OF LITERATURE

BY

HENRY W. NEVINSON

HIS SENSE OF LITERATURE

BY

HENRY W. NEVINSON

It is hard for me to write of Massingham's sense of literature without seeming to boast; our tastes were so strangely alike, and our favourite writers so much the same, though his reading was wider than mine, and more persistent. Let me give two instances only, though I could give many drawn from our long association. When I came back from the Græco-Turkish War of 1897, in which I had served as his war correspondent, he gave me a dinner with a few friends at the Devonshire Club, and in conversation he quoted a passage and asked if anyone could tell where it came from, he himself knowing the answer. As I knew *Tristram Shandy* almost by heart, I at once recognized the story about the journey of the abbess of Andoüillets and the pretty little novice to the hot-baths of Bourbon, and was able to give it as it stood. He was immensely pleased, and to that piece of good luck I attributed his appointment of me to be literary editor of the celebrated 'Literary Page', which he had established on the *Daily Chronicle* in the days of the paper's greatness, when he was editor.

In the second instance, which must have occurred soon afterwards, our judgment coincided almost supernaturally. I had been writing a long review of Bernard Shaw's *Perfect Wagnerite*, and had sent in my 'copy', when in the middle of the night a great improvement came into my mind. Next day I rushed down to insert it, and found the very words of my new idea already there upon the proof. I stood astounded. My scepticism of the supernatural began to shake. I asked for the 'copy', and found that the editor himself had inserted the improvement (not at all an obvious one), and in the very words I had in mind.

The mere formation of that 'Literary Page' was characteristic. An attempt had been made at it early in 1891, I think, when an extra sheet was pasted into the *Chronicle* once a week.

Later in that year it developed into a daily column, and at that time, or in the spring of 1892, Massingham took over the editing of 'the Page', as we always called it. When he succeeded Fletcher as editor of the paper, he entrusted the Page to Henry Norman, and then to myself. The only condition he laid upon me was that I should insert nothing in strong variance from the paper's general policy, but from first to last he never once interfered with my choice of books to be reviewed or with my choice of reviewer. Nearly always he allowed me three columns a day for reviews and the list of 'Books Received', and about once a month he gave me a Literary Supplement of ten or twelve columns. My only trouble with him was that he always wanted the best books to be reviewed first, so that the notices of the second-best accumulated horribly, and when I took over the Page, I found eighty columns of such notices awaiting treatment as 'over-matter'! I think that was his one fault as an editor throughout. Even on the *Nation*, he always longed to make each number the very best possible, and so a lot of inferior or duller 'stuff' had to be pushed aside, to await its appearance goodness knew when!

As I said, the creation and steady maintenance of the Literary Page on the old *Chronicle*, and of the strong literary side upon the *Nation*, so long as he remained editor, were characteristic. He never tolerated the fashionable separation of literature, or of any other form of art, from actual daily life. His mind was keenly alive to beauty in nature, in pictorial art, in the drama, and especially in literature; but he detested the conception of an exclusive and cloistered beauty as a peculiar privilege of æsthetic and literary circles. Take these few lines from *E. M. Forster and India*, included in the present selection:

'This habit of our latter-day critics of writing on literature as if its form-pattern, or its spiritual rhythm, and not its meaning and content, were the most important thing about it, is very characteristic of them. . . . It is just as informing to talk merely of the beautiful manner in which *A Passage to India* is written as it would be to remark of the *Decline and Fall* that "Mr. Gibbon had composed a wonderful architectural work on the early and late Roman Empire".'

So he felt small, if any, interest in the precious, the choice, the sweet and elegant charms of literature. It was the powerful, the fertile, the vital that attracted him. He once told me to write a 'middle' on Exuberance, and it was the exuberant in a writer that delighted him most. He often talked to me on this subject, and we heartily agreed in our admiration of the genius that could produce Falstaff, the Rabelaisian outpourings, the innumerable personalities of Dickens, and Victor Hugo's lavish abandonment. That carelessness of largesse won his heart. All true poets and masters of prose, of course, he admired, but his special delight was in the superb fertility of men like Byron and Tolstoy – men possessed of an infinity of riches, flinging their treasure abroad with the recklessness of Omar's rose:

> Look to the blowing Rose about us – 'Lo,
> Laughing,' she says, 'into the world I blow,
> At once the silken tassel of my Purse
> Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.'

I well remember the joy with which he came once into the *Nation* lunch announcing: 'I have found a man, a big man, a writer on the grand scale!' It was Galsworthy, at that time an almost unknown author, who had written for Massingham a short sketch, called, I think, *A Lost Dog*, and from that widely human and sympathetic study, our editor had divined the rest.

The same love of exuberance, fertility and intimate connection between literature and life was seen in his admiration for Goethe, about whom he often used to chaff me for my habit of quoting from his works. In Goethe he found the buoyancy and delight in life that he himself always longed to feel, and sometimes felt. So we read in his essay on Shaw and Swift:

'Goethe, like Swedenborg, had seized the Pauline conception of ascent from Adam, the first man, to the second, who is the Lord from Heaven. And so he reserved for his Faust an active and fruitful old age, passing, in the final content of accomplishment, into the rapture of redeemed and purified love.'

That large love of man and nature united him to Meredith, of whom, again in one of these essays, he wrote:

'His overflowing sense of nature's desirableness, his man's and poet's delight in the wonder and beauty of the physical universe, made him impatient of man-made explanations of them. Nature spun no "runes" for man to unriddle in metaphysical formulæ; she was a spirit, to be spiritually discerned.'

It may seem strange that, side by side with all the attraction of exuberance and prodigality in literature, we should find the continuous affection for the melancholy, frugal, and meditative spirit of Hale White ('Mark Rutherford') and all his works. Like every really notable man I have known, Massingham was full of contradictions, and did not worry about consistency. There was much in him of 'Mark Rutherford's' temperament. This is not the place to discuss the deeply underlying religious sense of his nature, but the transition from the atmosphere of the little chapels in East Anglia into the broad sunshine of the higher literature was so much the same as the experience described in 'Mark Rutherford's' *Deliverance* that the attraction was inevitable, even apart from the sincere but subtle simplicity of 'Mark Rutherford's' nature and manner. One could trace the admiration to a kind of spiritual 'nostalgia' – a regretful longing such as we often feel at the sight of an old home, in which, after all, we were not particularly happy.

On the more strictly critical side of his literary sense one could point, in the included essays, to such passages as the detection of 'a certain ghostliness in the music of Thomas Hardy . . . The grave, he seems to say, ends all – save the unconquerable spirituality of man. Never does the past really die. Never does a human voice sink but to utter some call of the dead Orpheus to the living soul'. And, in continuation of the same thought: 'The village is, after all, a better mirror of human life than the town; at all events we see clearer by it, and much further into the bygone time'. Or as an example of fine criticism take that passage at the beginning of the essay on *Dead Souls*:

'The re-perusal of that wonderful book awoke in me an accustomed reflection – whether it is ever possible to tell the

truth about men in any other way than by a parable. We know that this was the resort of Jesus, of the Buddha, of Socrates-Plato – in fact of all the original teachers of religion. . . . The great observer of life is bound to hide his discoveries about it in an imaginative, a fictitious dress. Necessarily there is loss in the method. The meaning of the parable escapes the heavy ear; puzzles the simple intelligence. But I fancy that something is always retained; and that, comparing the direct with the hinted monition, the Sermon on the Mount with the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the latter has the more intimate and fruitful history. Both the tenderest and the most horrible things have a veil over them that cannot be rudely withdrawn.'

There is similarly fine observation in the criticism which opens the essay called *The River of Ships*:

'Artists appear at rare intervals, but there is one simple test of practice of their arrival. The moment they begin to handle their material, the world discovers what an extraordinarily rich and plastic thing it is. It does not matter very much what subject they choose; it matters not at all how often that subject has been treated. The last Madonna may be as good as the first, and there is always a fleet of fighting *Téméraires* to be towed to their berth.'

Such passages reveal the true critic, the man of fine and careful appreciation. Massingham was a great reader of new and old. His memory was retentive of the best, and he felt the poet's delight in beauty; chiefly in the beauty of strong and fertilizing creation, but also at times in the sadder and more wistful beauty of the reflective, the regretful, and the introspective novels and essays or poems composed by such last-century spirits as Matthew Arnold and Hale White. Indeed he found pleasure and elevation of mind in every variety of genuine and individual art. For against 'the insipid pattern of our civilization' he stood in lifelong rebellion.

HENRY W. NEVINSON

SHAW AND SWIFT

SHAW's part in modern literature has been that of the critical rather than the creative artist; and as this is the account he renders of himself in one of the most interesting of his dramatic prefaces,[1] it is unnecessary to labour the point. He ought, he tells us, to have set out to be from the first the 'iconographer' of the religion of his time. He preferred to describe its institutions by way of a series of comedies of manners, wrought in the ironical manner. In this he was wrong. He should have set out for Damascus earlier, for his consciousness had all along told him that civilization needed a religion, 'as a matter of life and death'. But somehow the call did not come. So instead of an 'iconographer' he became an iconoclast, content to play his part in the destruction of Bibliolatry and other fetishes. Then he grew dissatisfied. Mechanistic evolution proved as inadequate as Paley's Grand First Watchmaker. How had the universe really come to be what it is, and Adam had breathed into him the divine spark that made him a living soul? And how had his descendants, misled as they were by the legendary form of their religion into taking it for literal fact instead of for spiritual truth, contrived, with all their superstitions, to follow the light that always shone within and above and beyond them? Well, the revealing and redemptive word came at last. It was 'Creative Evolution'. Man was a spirit, capable of assisting the Divine purpose, but, like Shaw, postponing the effort. Then he decided to will to live longer, and Shaw immortalized the effort in his *Metabiological Pentateuch*, otherwise commended under the more popular title of *Back to Methuselah*.

Now it is clear that for a child of this retrocessive age, or even a little of the age to come, the attempt to exhibit and forecast the spiritual ascent of man is very difficult. If in such an hour the eye of faith can still perceive the advance, the sensitive literary mind may well fail to discover what point of fresh and inspiring departure remains for the discouraged souls and polluted fancies of the survivors of the Great War. It is singular that a great writer, one of the greatest, pursuing his

[1] *Back to Methuselah;* A Metabiological Pentateuch. (Constable.)

theme of the baseness of mankind, hit upon the same expedient as Shaw has devised to figure forth the hope of a divine issue to its adventure on earth. Swift conceived the idea of the lengthening of the average term of human life and invented the Struldbrugs. Shaw has devised the Ancients. We must leave the readers of *A Voyage to Laputa* and *As Far as Thought Can Reach* to make their choice between the picture of the self-regarding man reduced to helpless dependence and that of intellectual virtue relieved of the temptation to possessive or even altruistic affection. That they are comparative studies in decay, neither Swift confronted with Shaw, nor Shaw confronted with Swift, would deny. Swift, indeed, knew nothing of evolution, creative or mechanical. But he had one thing in common with Shaw, in addition to wit and a wonderful art in writing. He hated human passion, having indeed a fearfully sharpened sense of the part it played in his own life and in the world of war and politics and sensual intrigue into which he was born. And it seemed to him that the more you prolonged the term of man, the worse, or at least the more pitiful, he got. Shaw, as truly benevolent as Swift, and with much the same intellectual view of contemporary life, but more good-natured, has had the happy idea of moralizing the Struldbrugs. So he eviscerates them. His human beings of the perfectible period, ovarian in origin, are allowed four quarrelsome years of love and devotion to art. The centuries that remain to be lived through are given to contemplation. Sex remains, but so attentuated as to be hardly worth noticing. The fighting instinct – the Cain-man, has gone altogether. Shaw calls this Elysium 30,000 years hence. Really it is the island of Laputa over again. The scientists are in power, having, it appears, overcome their present inclination to disintegrate the atom and make a Shakespearean clearance of the last Act of Man's drama on the earth. But they are as absurd as ever. They have seen to it that Man's soul is preserved, but that it kills his body, while a speculative (and presumably spectacled) being awaits in chill resignation a fresh creative or destructive impulse arising in the inventive soul of Lilith.

It will be asked what space is left in this shadow-world of Shaw's for the religious idea with which he identifies his later

dramatic work, and of which *Back to Methuselah* is, he hints, to be the final illustration. Is it either religious or scientific? A certain number of supermen will to live for three hundred years. In spite of Weismann, this 'acquired modification' is imparted, until it reaches out to a natural immortality, bar accidents. But what of the mass of mankind? Shaw rather contemptuously consigns them to the class of 'short-livers', who appear to be mainly Britons, with Imperial headquarters in Baghdad. Presumably they die out, or, as in the case of the elderly English gentleman in Part IV, are assassinated by the supermen. But with the loss of the Socialist conception of the rise of humanity *en masse*, all the warmth dies out of the idea of social progress. It becomes ascetic and Manichæan. In his expository preface Shaw rightly distinguishes Goethe, the Olympian, from the pessimist Shakespeare and the realist Ibsen, the critical and irreligious dramatists of intellectual Europe. For Goethe, like Swedenborg, had seized the Pauline conception of ascent from Adam, the first man, to the second, who is the Lord from Heaven. And so he reserved for his Faust an active and fruitful old age, passing, in the final content of accomplishment, into the rapture of redeemed and purified love. But there are no raptures for Shaw. Man's Cosmic Experience is for him the tearing of one illusion after another from the skin of a carnal and hypocritical creature. 'We were well enough in the Garden', he makes the ghost of the toiling, unimaginative Adam cry at the close of his sombre retrospect of what is rather a thin, qualitative selection than a generous process of creative evolution. Yes, indeed; if the end of all his toil was to eliminate not only the egoistic perversity of man, but effort and affection, and to leave him mooning round an animal-less sphere, from which pain and strife have disappeared, while wisdom swallows up good, leaving itself equally devoid of object and content. Shaw makes Lilith, the mystical mother of birth, describe this arrival at the gates of death, figured as if they were the only Heaven of which man was capable:—

'They have taken the agony from birth; and their life does not fail them even in the hour of their destruction. Their

breasts are without milk; their bowels are gone; the very shapes of them are only ornaments for their children to admire and caress without understanding.'

What, then, has been accomplished? Man has cured himself of his vileness, and Cain, the first murderer, lies buried with his innumerable progeny of the violent and the unredeemed. Of Life itself there cannot well be an end; the vast landscape of creation will always fade into a populous 'beyond'. But the reign of the spirit in the human heart is merely the signal for the slowing down of its tumultuous beat, and God reappears as the pale Avatar of annihilation.

It seems to me to be quite natural for Hamlet-Shaw to end thus, though it hardly justifies him in cutting formally loose (as he has so often done) from the pessimism of Shakespeare. Shaw, even when in nominal pursuit of State Socialism, was always, like Swift, a pessimistic rationalist, bravely dropping seeds of liberty and truth into the spirit of man. His pilgrimage has shown him that man does not live long enough to attain to either, and so he gives him three hundred years in which (with the help of science) to try again. But even in the act of creative evolution he discovers that there is nothing much to evolve, only a great deal to purge and cast away. What was to be done in the way of spiritual progress with a creature of such violent and endemic irrationality as man? For sixty years Shaw had seen and observed it in the attractive guise of God's Englishman. What could he make of such a being? He was a wit and an Irishman. What beauty could he see in Imperialism? An acutely sensitive critic of art, he was too much of a Puritan to become its devotee. It belonged to the childhood and the enthusiasm of the past. Shaw's powers of style and self-expression gave him a hold on these two worlds of British idealism and British Philistinism; but something incurably fastidious in his nature has always forbidden him to conceive a truly religious affection for the human being. For a killing, vivisecting, flesh-eating, coarsely love-making, woodenly selfish, and yet absurdly complacent animal like that, the best that Shaw could predict was a deliverance from the body of its death. That was as far as his thought would reach. His artist

wings have never been quite strong enough to carry him into the mystic region where both the Christian and the humanist poet saw God as the centre of radiant energy, eternally renewed. Sick of materialism in life and thought, he has turned, he says, to metaphysics. In reality, he ends as a Christian heretic, a Manichee of the twentieth century.

The style and artistry of this long series of fabulist plays, with their provoking and energetic preface, are unequal. The opening scene in the Garden of Eden, and of the Serpent's incitement to the adventure that is to end in nothing, is a masterpiece, easily and beautifully playable, and it is a pity that Shaw could not carry on his concise, dramatic start to the end of his journey. The middle is a halt for political comedy by the way. The close catches up the lost philosophical idea of the enterprise, and restores it to dignity and spiritual consequence. Here the child-lover frolics butterfly-like on the scene, before the shades of ancient wisdom close on her and on the disillusioned artists who follow her brief morn. Here the He and She Ancients appear and retire to their groves and mountains, morosely contemplating a world that is already dead. Here the ghosts of the past – of the Adam who toiled and willed, of the Eve who was curious, of the Serpent who tempted, and introduced laughter and death to the world – revisit the glimpses of a moon-like earth, where the weak live for ever, while Lilith, the deputy-creator, preaches the funeral sermon of humanity. It is an impressive, a poetic conclusion. But it is not the attainment of God. It is the fall of the leaves of the Tree of Life.

N.B. – From the 'Nation' of July 2, 1921, *and republished in Mr. Ernest Rhys's Anthology of 'Modern English Essays – 1870–1920'* (1922).

NOTE

So incisive a study, written with such economy of speech, needs no lame commendation from me. But I cannot refrain from stressing its moral – that the greatest quality in my father's expression was its power of feeling. In all the dust and tedium and evanescence of forty years of journalism, and journalism only, he never really wrote a line that did not come from his

heart – except when he was writing aphorisms and epigrams. His judgments were sometimes hasty, occasionally even superficial, and he had a sharp tongue. But he never committed the vulgar sin of modern journalism, that of writing with the mind awake and sensibility asleep. That is why, I think, he puts his finger straight upon the central flaw of *Back to Methuselah*; that the creative evolution of its Preface and opening Act fades into the shadowland of the Ancients in its close.

Nevertheless, I think that my father does less than justice either to the Preface or the Garden of Eden scenes. The first is more than 'thought-provoking and energetic'; as a piece of sustained invective, it has no rival outside Swift, and is, to my mind, just as good as the best of Swift's pamphlets. It is also the most terrific demolishment of orthodox neo-Darwinism; it is a demoniac piece of writing and behind it is the genius of a destroying angel. Neo-Darwinism will go on like an automaton, blind and mad and soulless, but soon it will crash, for not science, nor any movements nor tendencies have destroyed it, but just Shaw. As its Perseus, let him be acclaimed as the liberator of his age.

As for the Garden of Eden scenes, it is not enough to call them a 'masterpiece', and there leave it. They are, in the first place, the poetry of vision; and in the second, they are an absolutely true parable of the tremendous advances being made by modern ethnology. Yet Shaw probably knows nothing whatever of them. And this is genius.

Talking of Swift, here is an extract from a private letter: 'The world seems exclusively inhabited by Devils. Do you read Swift? Try the Advice to Servants. It is extremely wicked, truthful and amusing. And if you want wrath to inflame your mind, he is God's instrument for awaking it. If you haven't read *Gulliver* lately, read it over again, *unexpurgated*. All modern war is in the Voyage to Brobdingnag.'—H.J.M.

'MARK RUTHERFORD'

THERE has of late been a revival of interest in a writer who, in fact, has never gone out of fashion with his lovers. I mean 'Mark Rutherford'.[1] This renewal of affection is an experience in men's literary as in their personal lives. Who that has ever been in love with Byron ever quite forgets him? And how quickly revives the passion for Shelley, grown cold maybe over some dissatisfaction with his form! 'Mark Rutherford', indeed, carries more over from his period into ours than most of the Victorians. He is nearer to us, not in time only, but in substance and manner. He is melancholy and sceptical in our way even more than in that of his earlier contemporaries. For he saw what was coming, and had indeed partly come, in the later years of his long life, the hard, shallow, material life of the great industrial city, which he had seen at its worst – the London of the 'sixties and 'seventies – the dissipating, distracting influence of the popular Press, the loss of faith and of the sense of beauty. Like Arnold, he lacked high spirits, and, like him, was contemptuous of politics and journalism, the two English substitutes for the popular religion which he had studied in the decadent Nonconformity of the middle and later Victorian periods. So he appears, apart from his peculiar and most attractive artistry, as a father and prophet of our time, unaware of its greater calamities, but with a brooding sense of their arrival. He is even in touch with its troubles. Some pages of the *Deliverance*, for example, give a striking picture of the frightening effect of unemployment. And 'Mark Rutherford' can look back as well as forward. *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* is the one novel I know which combines a magnificent sketch of the revolutionary scene with an heroic study of the revolu-

[1] The novels of Mark Rutherford (William Hale White.) A New Uniform Edition in six volumes. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford. With a Memorial Introduction by H. W. Massingham, and a Portrait.

The Deliverance.

The Revolution in Tanner's Lane.

Miriam's Schooling.

Catharine Furze.

Clara Hopgood.

tionary temperament. *A Tale of Two Cities* is a fine book, with one or two strokes of absolute genius. But, in the main, it is a re-writing of Carlyle. *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* is as original as *Henry IV* or *The Canterbury Tales*. It is a piece of imaginative history, unsurpassed in our literature for liveliness and concentration of effect.

But 'Mark Rutherford' is not to be claimed for any school of political thought. He is the artist, throwing out, through the medium of his beautiful prose, the depth and the simplicity of his thought and the intensity of his feeling about life. It is hard to define very closely his exact place in literature. Perhaps he may be called one of the sad humanists. His main subject is somewhat remote. Born and brought up in the Eastern Midlands, he is especially the historian of the little chapel, of the lesser township and the small trading folk who dwelt in it, the men and women of sixty years ago, who rarely read anything, and whose mental relaxations were the 'Dorcas Meeting' and the gossip of the local conventicle. You can see the country he describes in a railway journey between London and Bedford or Huntingdon. As for his soul journeys, they were made by thousands of our fathers and mothers, and by some of us who have reached the middle passage. Does the scenery seem strange to younger eyes? It may, to a world of 'jazzing' and cinemas.

But I imagine that Rousseau's *Confessions* are still read, and that such themes as the unrest of genius, and the travail of fine natures in hard and commonplace surroundings, can stir even the modern mind. Moreover, 'Mark Rutherford' is extraordinarily full of passion. It is suppressed; for an extreme delicacy of expression marks his Puritan upbringing, and, in some degree, maybe, his temper. With one exception, his heroes are rebels only in thought. But the loves of Pauline and Zachariah Coleman, and the sorrows of Miriam and Catharine, are of the things, exquisite in structure and suggestion, which will not die in men's souls as long as the love of literature lives. Catharine Furze is to me as lovely a figure as Hardy's Tess or Meredith's Lucy – as human and as finely arrayed. The detail, indeed, is not elaborated, as in our hard, curious, modern writing, with its auctioneer's zeal for cataloguing things that

do not matter. More is left to fancy. The hand is that of an artist to whom one stroke of needless brushwork is an offence. But if a young writer wants to learn how to describe anything, let him take as model this picture of the hard-shell Baptist chapel in Cowfold:—

'As for Zoar, it was a place apart. Its minister was a big, large-jawed, heavy-eyed man, who lived in a little cottage hard by. His wife was a very plain-looking person, who wore, even on Sundays, a cotton gown without any ornament, and who took her husband's arm as they walked down the lane to the chapel. The Independent minister, the Wesleyan minister, and, of course, the rector, had nothing to do with the minister of Zoar. This was not because of any heresy or difference of doctrine, but because he was a poor man, and poor persons sat under him. Nevertheless, he was not in any way a characteristic Calvinist. The Calvinistic creed was stuck in him as in a lump of fat, and had no organizing influence upon him whatever. He had no weight in Cowfold, took part in none of its affairs, and his ministrations were confined to about fifty sullen, half-stupid, and wholly ignorant people who found in the Zoar services something sleepier and requiring less mental exertion than they needed elsewhere; although it must be said that the demands made upon the intellect in none of the places of worship were very extensive. There was a small endowment attached to Zoar, and on this, with the garden and house rent-free, the minister lived. Once now and then – perhaps once in every three or four years – there was a baptism in Zoar, and at such times it was crowded. The children of the congregation, as a rule, fell away from it as they grew up; but occasionally a girl remained faithful and was formally admitted to its communion. In front of the pulpit was an open space usually covered; but the boards could be taken up, and then a large kind of tank was disclosed, which was filled with water when the ceremony was performed. After hymns had been sung the minister went down into the water, and the candidate appeared dressed in a long white robe very much like a nightgown. The dear sister, during a short address, stood on the brink of the tank for a few moments, and then descended into it beside the

minister, who, taking her by the neck and round the waist, ducked her fairly and completely. She emerged and walked dripping into the vestry, where it was always said that hot brandy and water was ready.'

Or this of Pauline dancing before her scandalized Calvinist lover:—

'. . . Pauline began dancing, her father accompanying her with an oboe. It was a very curious performance. It was nothing like ordinary opera-dancing, and equally unlike any movement ever seen at a ball. It was a series of graceful evolutions with the shawl, which was flung, now on one shoulder and now on the other, each movement exquisitely resolving itself, with the most perfect ease, into the one following, and designed apparently to show the capacity of a beautiful figure for poetic expression. Wave fell into wave along every line of her body, and occasionally a posture was arrested, to pass away in an instant into some new combination. There was no definite character in the dance beyond mere beauty. It was melody for melody's sake. A remarkable change, too, came over the face of the performer. She looked serious; but it was not a seriousness produced by any strain. It was rather the calm which is found on the face of the statue of a goddess.'

But Hale White's chief subject, like Byron's, is himself. Not a little of the setting of the *Autobiography* and the *Deliverance* is stuff taken from his own experience as a young divinity student expelled from College for doubting the orthodox canon, and as a vagrant in mid-Victorian London, living by the hack-work of London-Letter writing, and by canvassing for John Chapman's 'infidel' books. This is not exactly the Byron atmosphere, and there are other differences. Byron's egoistic melancholy was unlighted by religious faith, by any deep feeling for humanity, or by a definite sense of his times and their significance in the changing story of man's life. All these qualities are present in Hale White's pictures of middle England and of Victorian London. The atmosphere is rather still and unillumined, for White has no touch of Blake's fiery

and entranced vision. And the faith is by no means unwavering. White's feeling about life is crossed with irony, or even with a shade of despair. Something in the London that he knew as he paced its mean streets after his flight from the St. John's Wood College seemed 'insoluble'. 'Our times,' he says in the *Deliverance*, 'are answerable for the creation and maintenance of the masses of dark, impenetrable, subterranean blackguardism with which we become acquainted. The filthy gloom of the sky, the dirt of the street, the absence of fresh air, the herding of the poor into huge districts which cannot be opened up by those who would do good, are tremendous agencies of corruption.' He had no theory as to means of rescue. Socialism, as a spiritual idea for the government of society, appeared to him to be in the way of progress, but he thought it might fail and ruin us all. Christ's teaching seemed a draught of pure idealism, a true manual of the 'heavenly law to which everything strives'. But how small its power to break down the hard practice of the world, the tyranny of master over man, the terrors of unemployment, the rule of the petty-minded, the incurably selfish mass! His early Calvinism seemed to stereotype this fatalist view. Many might be called; few could in any case be chosen. 'Mark Rutherford' himself, with all his sensitiveness, is a hero of spiritual endurance; amid the strain and drive of his employment he keeps his personal refinement, his sacred circle of home affection. But he sinks under the lash of a slave-driver's tongue, which brings on a fatal heart attack. 'The next morning his salary up to the day of his death came in an envelope to his widow, without a single word from his employers save a request for acknowledgment. Towards midday his office coat, and a book found in his drawer, arrived in a brown paper parcel, *carriage unpaid*.' In this last word of contempt the author of the *Deliverance* sums up the coarseness of the industrial system, as he glimpsed it through the London fog and filth.

But Hale White's thought is rarely continuous; it is the mixed work of the philosopher's and the artist's temperament. And of the artist you may ask anything but consistency. So you may quote Rutherford-White for Calvinism, and against it; for the life of ideas, and for impassioned protests that it were better

to be 'a carpenter or a bricklayer in country air' than to waste existence in bothering about what is beyond you. 'One-fourth of life is intelligible, the other three-fourths is unintelligible darkness; and our earliest duty is to cultivate the habit of not looking round the corner.' If this seems a last word, it may be countered by others, which preach the 'absolute monarchy of the soul'. Intellectual peace is a different thing. Who can know God? Life may contain exquisite consolations for the refined and the temperate, but not a key to the ultimate purpose of things. 'The world is immense', he writes in his wonderful analytical sketch of the Book of Job, 'constructed on no plan or theory which the intellect of man can grasp. It is transcendent everywhere'. So, through the delicate reactions of a personality like 'Mark Rutherford', the eternal battle goes on.

Great writers are dateless. They seem to die for one generation and to be reborn in the next. So with Hale White. The corner of Nonconformist England of which he writes is known now only to a few grey-haired men and women, and the little brown-red chapels of its lanes and by-streets are sinking fast into spiritual decay. But these tales make them live again, much as Shakespeare's Mantua or Arden live. For through them walk the unresting ghosts of man's loves and contentions.

From the 'New Leader' of October 5, 1923.

NOTE

Mr. Fisher Unwin very kindly gave me full use of my father's memorial introduction to his edition of Hale White's works. It is not, therefore, any obstacle of copyright which has decided me against including it in this volume. Nor, again, is the rejection altogether due to the fact that I have been quite unable to afford the space for the longer and weightier criticism. I honestly think that the article here given is the best thing my father ever wrote of a man he greatly loved both for his achievement in letters and the kindred spirit that informed it. My father could say in one thousand words what many other writers of repute could say less comprehensively in fifty, and he himself in ten.

I have several letters of his on 'Mark Rutherford': 'I repent me that I suggested your reading Swift. He is a cruel fellow:

greatest of men, but his soul eaten out with contempt and savage pity for the lot of man. I turn to him when I feel like that, as I often do; but I'd no business to commend him to you. For an antidote, try (if you don't know him) 'Mark Rutherford'. Read, if it is fresh to you, *Catharine Furze*, or the *Autobiography*. It is melancholy, but full of consolation, and the truest, simplest artistry. I think him perfect in the sense in which some Dutch pictures are perfect. . . . I'll send you my dear Catharine'.

The second: 'I hadn't forgotten about *Catharine Furze*. . . . Try the *Autobiography* and the *Deliverance*, if you are tempted further. If you've ever been sad for a longish time, they will come with a kind of healing touch that doesn't soon go away. At least they clear away the stains of this London living'.

A third writes: 'I'm meditating here on 'Mark Rutherford' (on whom I hope soon to be writing) and his youth, so like, in its surrounding forces and colouring (though in nothing else) my own'.

A fourth: 'How did you like my beloved Mark? Did he soothe you, and also sadden? He always has that double effect on me. His work seems to me to be above everything beautiful; because of its *justice* of effect: rather like Mozart (don't sniff)'.

I was glad to find that another of his letters practically sanctions my exclusion of the Preface referred to above: 'I'll send you the proof of M. Rutherford, when it comes in. It isn't particularly good, for I hadn't the time or the strength to work out his philosophy, which is rather obscure and contradictory'. But he was seldom satisfied with his own work.—H.J.M.

MEREDITH AND ENGLISH LIFE

MANY men and women in the second generation of their lives will feel that, with the death of George Meredith, the intellectual scene has changed for them, and that they now look back on a great expanse of country through which they have travelled with much happiness, and which they will never see again. They know that they have set behind them the land of romance, and that they have moved, barely reckoning their progress, into a sterner, more barren region. The distance between the two may be measured by comparing the work of Meredith and Hardy – the tragedy of *Richard Feverel* with the tragedy of *Jude the Obscure*. The two books were written by men who were poets as well as novelists, and who alike disowned kinship with mere photographic writers of the type of Zola. But how far apart is their outlook! How differently they measure the forces in English life, how differently, allowing for their contrasted temperaments, they paint its atmosphere! Both were reformers and revolters, anti-clerical, inheriting in some degree the revolutionary strain in English letters which descended to them through Byron and Shelley. Yet we know that Meredith's criticism of life, expressed with a feeling of beauty to which Hardy had no claim, belongs to another order of ideas from that accepted by his friend and contemporary. Do we express the change too crudely when we claim Meredith as the last of the English Romanticists, and Hardy as the first of the latter-day English Realists? Meredith mixed his poetic and idealized vision of the world with a subtle and most eloquent intellectual comment upon it. But it was an ideal; and though it touched warm earth, its vivid and abundant colouring was taken, not from reality, but from romance.

Meredith, though one of the most fascinating members of his school, was hardly its greatest. He produced no book so broad and so tender in its humanity as *Les Misérables*. Even his devoted and self-abandoning heroes of action and politics, his Alvans and Beauchamps and Carlo Ammianis, tend to lose their highest selves in a maze of half-serious entanglements. England, while he loved her, limited him. The comic spirit,

waiting on his tragic muse, forbids us to remember Meredith as Hugo is remembered, by types and scenes terrible or deeply refreshing to the soul. Yet his comedy was not always world-comedy. His two most perfect works, *Evan Harrington* and *The Egoist*, are satires of insular snobbishness, the entrancing *Shagpat*, his most brilliant poetic phantasy, is akin to them, and his best short story, *The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper*, is a treatise on that inexhaustible theme. He felt and chafed against his bonds; in England, he said, the rebel's blow fell, not on rotten wood, but on a 'cushion on springs'. The mood to which his nature, his literary style, and his observation of English society most constantly led him as a writer of fiction and as a moralist, was irony; and of that great force he was a master. Comparatively ignorant of the workmen's lives, and divided between admiration of the aristocratic and conservative forces in the country and a sense of their intellectual barrenness, he drew most of his pictures from the aristocracy or from the manufacturing classes that fifty or sixty years ago seemed to be joined in grim battle with them for the supremacy of our State. The political Liberalism of that time might well have claimed him, artist as he was, as a splendid ally, a great vindicator. The human side of the social struggle somewhat escaped him, as it did not escape the more democratic Dickens; its later developments he hardly foresaw. It was characteristic of him that in his noble sketch, *The Old Chartist*, he sets forth not the sufferings of the silent and banished agitator, but his reconciling passion for the home and soil of his birth. When he touched congenial foreign ground he expanded, not indeed as a poet, for his beloved Surrey woods and uplands had all his heart, but as a friend of national liberty fighting gloriously for its own. It was something more than an author's feeling for a favourite child of fancy that made him declare to the writer that the passage in his books which he liked best was the description in *Vittoria* of the duel between Angelo and Captain Weisspriess.

Romantic in his literary attachments, as well as in his method, Meredith shared the anti-supernaturalism of the school to which most of his greater friends belonged. He was no more

of a materialist than Wordsworth. But his overflowing sense of Nature's desirableness, his man's and poet's delight in the wonder and beauty of the physical universe, made him impatient of man-made explanations of them. Nature spun no 'runes' for man to unriddle in metaphysical formulæ; she was a spirit, to be spiritually discerned, a truth which reappears in Nietzsche, with other of the robust conclusions of Meredith's creed. Of her ultimate beneficence he had no doubt, and he expressed this lifelong faith in the lines – some of the loveliest in the language – which revealed his noble cheerfulness about death:

> 'Death shall I shrink from, loving Thee?
> Into the breast that gives the rose
> Shall I with shuddering fall?'

But Meredith went no further than to read on the face of the visible world the smile which no poet ever denied her. This apparition of joy was enough; on it he built a gospel of fortitude, of resignation, of self-forgetfulness, and of spiritual delight.

It was this natural optimism which distinguished his work from the pessimistic religious poetry of his contemporaries, from Clough and Arnold, and from the reasoned and less pantheistic meliorism of Tennyson. No such note of spiritual Nature-worship had been struck in English verse since *Queen Mab*. Meredith's passion for natural life linked itself with a special love of English scenery and its characteristics, and here, as in the immortal love-story which made him famous, he touched Shakespeare. His lineage might have been more widely and more easily traced had his wonderful powers of expression stopped short at something like the same measure of luxuriance. But he had a zest for refinement and explanation, and he would furnish his main themes with a half-poetic, half-critical embroidery, like the harmonized and re-harmonized 'motives' proceeding from the great organ-note of Earth, in Wagner's *Ring* music. Here Meredith made his wilful departure from the line, from the centre. No language, even the wildly-tangled beauties of our tongue, rich as those of a country

lane in midsummer, could quite accomplish what he asked of English speech. His medium mastered him; he became almost a wild, as he had been a glorious, colourist and rhetorician; and his ideas about human society not being always the greatest and most general ideas, he was led out of the way where Tolstoy walks, in old age, as firmly as ever. His men and women, always a little puppet-like, began to talk strangely in the later books. But grace never left them; their creator could not help dispensing them, from the abundant richness of his nature, something of the great gift that kept him a poet even when he most obscured its expression. Meredith was 'full of the joy of living'. Mawkishness, unmanliness, touched him no more than the sadness, the want of good spirits, of our later time, and of much Victorian poetry. In this respect he was a renewing force, fresh from the all-sustaining bosom that he loved, and belonging to no special time in our story, but only to the undying glories of the English land.

From the 'Nation' of May 22, 1909.

NOTE

I stick to my view that the last years of my father's life bore the finest quality of grain – in spite of a piece like this rising up to confound me. One may say in general of his expression that it was always close-furled, because it had so strong a mind to drive it.

I demur a little, by the way, at – 'Nature spun no "runes" for man to unriddle in metaphysical formulæ; she was a spirit, to be spiritually discerned'. As a nature-poet, Meredith was the antithesis of Vaughan, but surely because Nature was a bindweeded porch to the starry courts ("and in these weaker glories spy . . .") to the one, and the flame of Earth to the other. I do not myself discover any spiritual discernment of Nature in Meredith, the bright and ruddy Pagan, and there is a far closer kinship between *Love in the Valley* and the *Pervigilium Veneris* than between any poem of Meredith's and any of the most spiritual of all the nature-poets.—H.J.M.

THE APOLOGY OF THOMAS HARDY[1]

If it is permissible for a great writer, reviewing his life's work, to address himself to his generation in the explanatory, and even to some degree in the admonitory vein, Thomas Hardy, of all contemporaries, holds the best title to that privilege. Since Shakespeare, no man has earned a better right to say: 'Here is a picture of England, the country of my birth. Here are the people from whom she sprang, and by whom she grows; lost in her cities, or transplanted beyond the seas, they are still England'. It is the special glory of this crowned work of eighty years of living that it cannot merely be described as portraiture, like Trollope's sketches of clerical life, or even as the noblest kind of traveller's tale, as is *Pickwick*, but that beyond all it is an offering to England of the poetic genius of her race. If Hardy's novels and poems be a rendering of the most familiar things in the English landscape, of church and ale-house, of the handicraft of ditcher, and thatcher, and sexton, still more profoundly do they appear as its soul's mirror. Extend the long line from Hamlet to Jude, and where else shall it be stayed at such twin points of splendour? Think of *As You Like It* as a drama of English woodland, and see if your fancy will anywhere rest on the long journey to our times with greater content than on the sunlit scenes of *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

And now fancy's child soliloquizes. It is probable, nay clear, that Mr. Hardy views with discontent one aspect of the national regard for his service, and accuses it of undeserved censure. He dislikes the title of pessimist; and, thinking with justice that a criticism which 'hearkens for the key-creaks' and is 'deaf to the diapason' misreads his music of humanity, pleads for a longer look at its architectural quality, and a broader conception of its purpose. 'I have shown you,' he says, 'something moving, becoming, the rational poetry of life; you fix me to a signpost at a dark crossing of the road. That was not my meaning. As life ever was, so it will be; passion and failure encompass it, and the incomplete rationality of man bears a terrible Nemesis. But if advance be in a looped orbit, and not

[1] *Late Lyrics, and Earlier, with many other Verses.* By Thomas Hardy. (Macmillan.)

in a straight line, advance there is, and in the old dream of alliance between science and religion lies the key of the house. With that mortar I, Thomas Hardy, the architect, built my drama of the ironies and the pities, and threw it on the screen of your English imagination.'

We have freely paraphrased Mr. Hardy's *Apology*; and shall make one comment on it, which, indeed, this volume of brief poems, ballads, and minor song-music sufficiently illustrates. There was, and is, a certain ghostliness in the music of Hardy. It would be impossible, we suppose, to gather from his works a single note of pure other-worldliness. The grave, he seems to say, ends all – save the unconquerable spirituality of man. Never does the past really die. Never does a human voice sink but to utter some call of the dead Orpheus to the living soul. It is this survival-quality which so impresses itself on Hardy's imagination that a great number of these later and earlier lyrics concern themselves either with the ghost-utterances of the departed, or with the spirit-voices of the imagined or the desired. He makes one of his characters live a life of expectancy of an unseen visitor:

> 'She was looking for a form
> She was listening for a tread,
> She could feel a waft of charm
> When a certain word was said.'

Nature's communications to man bear the same whispered suggestion:

> 'The hills in samewise to me
> Spoke as they greyly gazed.'

Even the musical instruments in the museum talk of their old players' dead fingers, 'stroked thinner and more thin'. Ghostly is the lover who draws near to the waiting woman, and the sights and sounds of the night prepare his coming with the 'watchful intentness' of Egdon Heath. Thus it is the mysterious 'aura' of these poems which yield them their rarely failing, at times their profound, impressiveness. Difficult, even tor-

tured, as is their form, it is nevertheless true that only one or two poets, notably Poe, excel Hardy (in this, the second string to his bow) for the power to render the 'heavily haunted harmony' of man's remembrance, the visible-invisible converse of souls. Doubtless Hardy's intense awareness of the past furnished growth and nurture for his faculty of spiritual invocation. The village is, after all, a better mirror of human life than the town; at all events, we see clearer by it and much farther into the bygone time. And to deny the true quality of poetry to such work is not only to exclude seers like Blake, Coleridge, and Browning from the poetic field, but to break a link fast forming between the brooding intuitiveness of the spiritual thinker and the later affirmations of science.

The poems have a second quality – their gift of narrative. Hardy, like Tchehov, is a Pasha of a thousand tales; and this volume of 280 pages and over 150 pieces might well serve for a garden-nursery of a second library of Hardy novels, while at least a score throw faintly back to some old master-piece. That the tale is of Frustration, of the drama of the wrong man with the wrong woman, can be said of them with, maybe, a little more truth than it can be said of Shakespeare. Nevertheless there are few or none to whom life brings no experience of this criss-crossness; all that can be said of Hardy is that the loss of partners in the dance happens to touch his sensibility as an artist more acutely or more ironically than it does some of his fellows. Certainly it is his chief title of endearment. These *revenants* of his are touches of Everyman; the spiritual link between Youth and Age, out of which the character of both is as inevitably forged and finished as are the limbs and sinews of their common tenement. In this respect, Hardy's human comedy is an appeal to one of the most wistful and enduring of all human sentiments; and if it be said that he has made an over-brooding study of his theme, he may reply, as he replies in his *Apology*, that his critics 'scrutinize the tool-marks' and have no eye to the building. That he wrote it with an ungenial, or even an uncheerful mind, is as untrue a characterization of him as it is a true one of Swift. For Hardy, first and last, is the great Countryman, and, first and last, this is the Countryman's song:

I

'This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly:
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at the *Travellers' Rest*,
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

II

'This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow-rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.'

From the 'Nation' of June 3, 1922.

NOTE

I have omitted an impression, part criticism, part personal sketch, called *Thomas Hardy and His New Play*, published eighteen months later, as being less 'quick in apprehension' than the above. My father journeyed down to Dorchester to see *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*, and paid a visit to Mr. Hardy while he was there. One would expect his account of play and poet to excel in interest his criticism of the *Late Lyrics*. But this is not so, and maybe the personal meeting was responsible. My father once took me to lunch at Max Gate, and it was not a comfortable two hours for me, partly because of my exceeding shyness of the great man, partly because two streams of high personality met without true harmony. My father was no countryman; he liked the country as a book – something to be opened, read, put aside

and forgotten, until it happened to come his way once more, when he read it again – as another book. Consequently, he never came to see Mr. Hardy as, say, Hudson passed an hour in the shade of an old thorn, and the old thorn beamed with blossom, but was chary of its restful shade. Neither of them got beyond an interchange of courtesies; the ball flew from one to the other and back again; but it was just a ball-game. They pelted each other with amenities, but from a long distance apart.—H.J.M.

A VISIONARY: OLIVE SCHREINER

OLIVE SCHREINER was not only the greatest woman of her time; she was one of the chief glories of English literature. *The Story of an African Farm*, with one or two doubtful exceptions, is the most thrilling story of the spiritual or the emotional life ever told by a woman. There are passages of description and reflection in *Woman and Labour* and *Thoughts on South Africa* which, for nobility of thought and stateliness of diction, rank as models of English classical prose. At her best she wrote not merely finely, but magically. A few sentences of the *African Farm* are enough to set before the mind's eye a complete picture of the scene and the people of the South African karoo and veld, and of the child-poet in whose immortal fancy they live for ever.

But Olive Schreiner was much more than a writer. She was of the stamp and form of the great. Her mind, combining, like George Sand's, the 'large-brained woman and large-hearted man',[1] reached forward to the future with the imaginative energy of the prophet, while it fixed, powerfully and firmly, the characteristics of her own time. More clearly than Cecil Rhodes she foresaw the future South Africa shaping itself from a congeries of petty States into a great Confederation. Rhodes infused his conception of a united South Africa with the base metal of the Raid and the War; Olive Schreiner kept hers crystal-clear from the beginning. She had just as true a divination of the meaning of the European War. In every great disturbance of men's minds and societies she looked at ends, not at passing phenomena; while her woman's deep feeling for life – the life of the stone or of the tiniest insect as well as that of man – kept her vision of it as tender as it was intellectually penetrating. Yet she had none of the contortions of the sybil. Her talk was by turns witty and passionate; and even when folly grew outrageous, as it is apt to do in conventional English circles, her worst comment on it was a fit of disconcerting laughter.

It is true that, measured by mere quantity, her work in

[1] Quoted by her in application to Lady Constance Lytton, in the Introduction to *Woman and Labour*.

literature was small. Indeed, her husband, in his tender biography of her,[1] makes its slightness and irregularity of output a subject of rather uncomprehending reproach. But nature had laid a heavy burden on her. Asthma, that scourge of the nervous temperament, pursued her almost from her earliest years, driving her from place to place and continent to continent, and in the end it may be true that, under its incessant attacks, she lost the power of prolonged concentration. In any case it is probable that she could never have written a *Faust*, any more than Goethe could have written *The Story of an African Farm*.

But what did that finally matter? Her best was perfection. And neither asthma, nor a troublesome heart, nor the nervous excitability which these plagues fostered, could narrow the scope or mar the moral grandeur of her finished work for humanity. Brief as it is, her *Woman and Labour* is the finest statement of 'the woman's case' in modern literature. Her pictures of the South African Boer will be remembered long after the virtues and faults of that stalwart race have disappeared in the insipid pattern of our civilization. Her fame as the true spiritual founder of the South African Union, the scourge of its base betrayal, and the intrepid preacher of a gospel of rights and duties for all its peoples, black and white, will have a longer life still. But her greatest gift was the spirit of imaginative love in which, in her long brooding over the life-story of man, she sought always to evoke the best in him, and to present him with the two great ideals of justice in the State and sympathy and understanding in the individual. 'The central power,' she said in *Woman and Labour*, 'which cannot propel the blood of sympathy and a common fellowship to the remotest member of its group is on the path to cardiac failure and a sudden death.' She would never follow the path to African unity with pioneers who simply stepped over the bodies of the Hottentot and the Bantu. And, on the other hand, all her ideas of morality and progress grew from her vision, not of individual or race-blessedness, but of perfect human fellowship.

[1] *The Life of Olive Schreiner*. By S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

The life of this remarkable woman is told by her husband with no literary pretension, but with simple affectionateness and a fine, if not perfect, comprehension. Clearly she tried him, as he tried her. Her asthma rarely allowed her to stay long in one spot, and loneliness and imperfect companionship equally drove her on from one halting-place to another. She had some difficult habits, such as a fancy for wandering noisily about her house in the dead of night. But the real trouble about her was that she was of faery stock, and that, her real life being lived from within, nothing external could satisfy her for long.

'As one grew to know her well,' said Havelock Ellis, her intimate friend, 'one felt that the overwhelming vivacity and intensity of her emotional and intellectual life was the most impressive thing about her, enhanced by the sounding-board of powerful expression. She possessed a nature that was fundamentally simple, strong, primitive, and passionate. It absorbed its food through its vivid sense organs, but it worked mainly within, creating the atmosphere of an imaginative dream-world. For all her keen vision of the external world she was rarely in quite accurate adjustment to that world. So it came about that while she possessed a more than feminine emotional and maternal disposition, and at the same time a ruthless and penetrating intellect that was more than masculine in its power, she was a child, a trustful, idealizing, imaginative, helpless child.'

Yet it is clear that this intense sensibility was a source of greater joy than sorrow to her. For its foundation was in a love of nature so profound and so satisfying that even *The Story of an African Farm*, a true nature-book, falls short of its ecstasy. Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner, describing the farewell visit she paid to the peak which overhung their first home together in the karoo, paints the rapture of her parting look:—

'Her large luminous eyes softly and slowly travelled from point to point. She stood all the time. At last, as her glance passed along the top where we stood, she said very gently yet with a deep thrill: "Oh Cron, look at that aloe"! I had

been watching her and her glance over the great distances, but at once turned to the aloe, a few of which grew on the top. This flower of the aloe – a long, yellow-red, poker-like rod of glowing flame – was almost covered with butterflies, sucking its honeyed juices, a few fluttering on and off at times, the others sitting busily drinking, opening and shutting their wings. It was a unique sight. I counted them as well as I could and made them about thirty. The unearthly absorption of her look now changed into one of subdued, beaming delight; she walked slowly close to the aloe and stood joyously watching it, with now and then a low exclamation of delight.'

To this nature-love she joined no very positive thinking about religion. She declared that she 'owed nothing to the teaching of Jesus', but when a very young child she felt, on her first reading of the Sermon on the Mount, that this was the faith for her. She ran to her mother, putting her finger on the passage in great excitement and saying, 'Look what I've found. Look what I've found. It's what I've known all along. Now we can live like this'. When she found, as she very soon did, that people did not 'live like this', and had not the smallest intention of doing so, she chilled rapidly, and her first book, as its readers well know, is as much a cry of emancipation as was *Queen Mab*. In later years she spoke about religion with a voice not unlike Samuel Butler's. She could not conceive of God and man and the material universe as distinct from each other. All was life and all was God. The things that seemed dead were dead only to our eyes, though their real life was just manifest to genius, the great interpreter. Christianity, in limiting the Divine interposition to man, did not go far enough or deep enough for her. She had her all-vision; it absorbed and contented her.

Not that this spiritual creature disdained the earth. For all her excitability, her intellectual impatience, and her physical suffering, she enjoyed it immensely. And though often disillusioned, she had a shrewd eye for imposture, a still shrewder one for corruption. At first she was much attracted by Rhodes, and he by her. But quite early in her friendship she divined

the falseness of his nature, and before the Raid warned her brother William, Rhodes's close associate and warm admirer, of the coming betrayal. A single touch of cruelty armed her at once against the offender, and once in her black books, he remained there for ever. For, as one of her friends once said of her, she finally gave reason of the brain a lower place than reason of the heart. Through it she read character as she read life, and it rarely betrayed her.

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NOTE

My father's heart was in his work, as the saying goes, more than in the world of human beings. In some quarters he bears the fame of a champion reviler, and many a golf-course has rung with his curses loud and deep. So, when he came to bless, the warmth and generosity of his feeling gave a personal colour to the things of the mind, while the passion that he brought against the sins of the world was the same as that he gave to minds of rare quality.—H.J.M.

MR. NEVINSON'S CAREER

MR. H. W. NEVINSON has one great quality as a journalist. None of his contemporaries stands out from the crowd of Fleet Street with a sharper note of distinction, of being and remaining himself. Its rolling and flattening-out processes seem to have left him untouched. Journalism could snare and keep him, but it could never tame and coarsen. For years Nevinson has turned to and from most of its higher avocations – leader-writing, the composition of 'middles', war-correspondence, reviewing, and even 'descriptive' reporting – without rubbing one particle of brightness off his individuality, or spoiling his gift for producing beautiful and even classical English – easy and allusive, full of feeling, and of excellent matter of the mind. Some of his attributes may seem singular or even a little contradictory of each other. For example, there is a Zeal-for-Peace Nevinson and a Smite-to-Slay Nevinson, living apparently on excellent terms with each other; and a professor of Socialism at no visible odds with an ardent Nietzschean, sworn foe of that 'cold monster', the State. But these are antinomies of the mind, and Nevinson is of the favoured race for whom there are no rules but those of the spirit. He has had a most romantic career, full of perils, battles, stratagems, and temporal triumphs and disappointments. All of it can be spiritually grouped under his favourite Goethe's ideal of 'resolute living in all things good, true, and beautiful'.

His book[1] has an interest apart from its attraction as a portrait of a generous and adventurous personality. Its earlier pages are an animated record of the trials of a young and very rebellious Englishman of the second half of the nineteenth century, coming from a Puritan home of the straitest Evangelical (Anglican) pattern, in contact with the routine of the Public School and University life of that date. All these things are very amusingly described, but they are also written for the instruction of our age and its youth. Nevinson's descent is from the squirearchy, transplanted from Westmoreland to the Midlands, and fixed to a now obsolete but then prevailing

[1] *Changes and Chances.* By H. W. Nevinson. (Nisbet.)

mould of faith and daily habit. He describes his family at Leicester with candour. It was 'Conservative, uncultured, and God-fearing', having no literature but the Bible, and no serious subject but religion, tempered, in his father's case, by archæology. It was so violently anti-Catholic that Nevinson records of his father that he would turn away even from the sight of a priest of the Roman Church. As for the Tractarians, they were intimately connected with the fires of Smithfield and the universally read *Book of Martyrs*. That society naturally produced a large crop of revolting sons and daughters, but many of them were sturdy rebels, and had ways of escape. In Nevinson's case they were Shrewsbury and Oxford. Before that release came a time of slavery to one of those fearsome institutions from which middle-class children of fifty years ago used to be projected into the Public School with half their freshness caned or squeezed out of them. Shrewsbury was a different matter. Nevinson was very happy there, in spite (and a little because) of the fact that his beloved Greek was treated as a 'graduated series of problems' in iambics, designed for Shrewsbury boys to solve. In fact, Shrewsbury did not quite begin and end with iambics. It left Nevinson, as it left some hundreds of boys, equipped with a singularly healthy body and a life-long passion for Greek literature. More it did not attempt to do. The little mathematics that were taught were the scorn of the classical side, while 'of such diversions as physical science or mechanics we never even heard'. The lower forms, indeed, acquired the arts of lighting fires and plain cooking for the Upper Sixth, became expert steeple-chasers, and were introduced to the art of politics by being taught to say: 'God save the Queen and down with the Radicals'.

From Shrewsbury Nevinson passed to Oxford in the not too happy guise of a Scholar of Christ Church, 'then regarded as a necessary evil'. Years before, in his father's company, he had caught a glimpse of Pusey, 'a remarkable figure in Tom Quad being conducted in scarlet robes to the Cathedral'. But his Oxford was the later one of the Ruskin Lectures (where he saw Oscar Wilde, 'leaning his large and flabby form against the door'), a little of Pater, more of the growing in-

fluence of Scott Holland, grotesque, almost ape-like, to look at, but with body and soul 'going at full gallop', and of the Broad-High-Church Movement, of which Holland was the chief evangelist. Nevinson seems to have stood out in shyness from this spiritually exciting whirl, until he came up with it later on in the East End, sobered, broadened, and intellectualized, in the person of Canon Barnett and his associates at Toynbee Hall. He gives a vivid and truthful picture of that remarkable man. This, for example, of Barnett's style in speaking:—

'There was no passionate outpouring, no attempt at oratory or splendid language or moving appeal. It was thought out to the bare bone; short sentences crammed as full as they could hold and then left. To me, detesting all rhetoric, it came with relief; but literary or emotional people went away disappointed. "Protests against error become in their turn errors"; "Idolators recognize no change"; "Unpopularity is no condemnation, but neither is it an acquittal"; "The sense of sin has been the starting-point of progress"; "Quarrelling is the luxury of security" – how admirable such sentences are! Each would make a text for an essay.'

Another figure was Octavia Hill, then engaged in promoting her 'Settlement' in Southwark:—

'When she took the chair at a council of our officers, I used to compare her in my mind to Queen Elizabeth among her admirals and pirate explorers. For the solid, little figure with powerful head, masses of loose grey hair, large, benign, but watchful brown eyes and mouth closing tight like an unyielding steel trap when she was displeased, displayed all the great Queen's indomitable resolution, power of command, personal affection or dislike, and scrupulous regard for every halfpenny spent or received.'

Nevinson's part in these philanthropies of the East End of the 'eighties and 'nineties was largely that of a promoter of their schemes of physical culture. He led 'a merry pack of human hounds' from Aldgate Pump to Cambridge Heath

Road. He organized a cadet company, to the scandal of pacifists. And he wrote in *Neighbours of Ours* much the most brilliant and moving of the many literary pictures of that new discovered world. Then he was drawn through the journalism of the *Daily Chronicle* of my days to the mixture of travel, literary editorship and wittily tender writing which distinguished him, in that literary-journalistic revival, among his contemporaries. Nevinson did not belong to the order of the 'scoop' correspondents. But he had a fuller share than most of them of really arduous and exacting enterprise, notably his wonderful climb over Pindus to Arta in the Thirty Days' War, and his part in their lot of martyrdom with the defenders of Ladysmith. His description of that glorious and terrible chapter in the history of British arms is the closest piece of writing in this book, suitable, if our children's children desire instruction in the suffering of war and the heroism of their race, to be read out to them for example and admonishment. One dark figure, not too darkly painted, stands out from Nevinson's canvas. It is that of Buller, who, when besought to engage his fresh troops in pursuit of the retreating Boers, replied, 'Damn pursuit!'

'Two days later, with all the pomp of his active, healthy, and vigorous army, he celebrated a triumphant entry into the suffering town. Sir George White's garrison lined the route in his honour. Unable to stand, they sat down upon the edges of the road. On the steps of the battered Town Hall Sir George was waiting, surrounded by his staff. I happened to be sitting on the kerb exactly opposite. As Buller passed, Sir George and all the staff saluted. But Buller turned his head away and made no response.'

Changes and Chances is a small gallery of beautiful portraiture; but this is its diploma picture.

From the 'Spectator' of October 10, 1923.

NOTE

This is Massingham on Nevinson, his colleague. For Nevinson on Massingham, his editor twice over, open

the pages of the book here reviewed. Spirits thus equally scarred in the service of mankind may be permitted a word of good cheer to each other, without depriving the laundryman of his employment. His quarrel is with lesser men—H.J.M.

THE RIVER OF SHIPS

Artists appear at rare intervals; but there is one simple test of practice of their arrival. The moment they begin to handle their material, the world discovers what an extraordinarily rich and plastic thing it is. It does not matter very much what subject they choose; it matters not at all how often that subject has been treated. The last Madonna may be as good as the first, and there is always a fleet of fighting *Téméraires* to be towed to their berth. Mr. Tomlinson chooses the River Thames.[1] Dickens and Whistler have immortalized it. That does not prevent Mr. Tomlinson from presenting a new and perfectly concrete image of its foreshore, its streets and docks, its artificers and citizens, and its way to the greater and the lesser deeps. His book is quite astonishing as a picture; it is, indeed, more of a gallery than a single sketch, so that when the final touch and gradation of colour have been added, and the walls of this dream-city of his fade into the sun with the encompassing sea, you have left with you not a poetic vision only, but a firm and comprehensive study of reality.

It is indeed remarkable how these two impressions remain. A sentimentalist would have spoiled either or both. Deficient artistry would have made these people of Poplar seem less actual, or the ships and the sea they use less beautiful, or would have failed rightly to relate the men and the things they work in. Mr. Tomlinson makes neither of these mistakes. He is a singularly precise workman, as all truly poetic writers are. His prose has a fine and not too intricate measure, and its colour lights on the ships, the sea, and the roofs and alleys of his Dockland, not with a mechanical glow, but with quaint and sparkling distinctness. He is adventurous with his adjectives – which are rare and weighted with meaning – and they do not betray him. But he is above all an artist of life. For all its rare æsthetic quality, his book is much more than a picture of a shy London neighbourhood, thrown on the screen of a lively and sensitive imagination. Mr. Tomlinson is very fond of ships and of sailors. But essentially his aim

[1] *London River.* By H. M. Tomlinson. (Cassell.)

is to present a bit of English character and English history – a study of men and of men's labour. The clippers he describes so well are to him a sign of good apprenticeship in their makers, 'a ring on the counter like a sound guinea'. The men who built these ships, or knew them, and whom he has seen lay hands of 'affection' on them when in dock, had put a life's practice into their handling, and are presented here, with many touches of curious insight, as of the stuff into which that service had shaped or warped them. It is the human soul of Dockland which is his care, more even than the ships that are its wings and messengers.

London River is, therefore, a work of high and unusual value, and not merely a piece of brilliant writing. It has to me the special interest of being incidentally a catalogue of many curious things which belonged in my day to the boyhood of half England, and whose memory springs up again under his evoking touch upon them. Almost every imaginative boy has made his inventory of just such a 'best parlour' as Mr. Tomlinson attaches to a decaying home in Dockland, and can fit into his most precious hours a tavern like the *Negro Boy*, though haunted, maybe, by a different sort of seafaring man. But the *mise en scêne* of *London River* is a more splendid thing than my youth ever knew. For Mr. Tomlinson can always give the impression of looking out through a vista of devious and ill-lighted streets into a world of tropical interest and variety. He has seen the 'bowsprits and jib-booms of the Australian packets diminish down the quays of the East Dock as an arcade', beckoning the way to the largess of the Spanish Main. To-day those quays are deserted, but the new spirit of steam and drive has given him the chance to set in contrast the old seamen and the new, and to paint the ships they handle, not as 'senseless, trancèd' things, but as changing types and embodiments of human endeavour. Take this picture of the barque:—

'She headed downstream. Her row of white ports diminished along the length of her green hull. The lines of her bulwarks, her sheer, fell to her waist, then airily rose again, came up and round to merge in one fine line at the jib-boom. The

lines sweeping down and airily rising were light as the swoop of a swallow. The symmetry of her laden hull set in a plane of dancing sun-points, and her soaring amber masts cross-sparred, caught in a mesh of delicate cordage, and shining till they almost vanished where they rose above the buildings and stood against the sky, made her seem as noble and haughty as a burst of great music. One of ours, that ship. Part of our parish.'

And then compare it with this sketch of a steamer getting under way:—

'. . . looming over us, a gigantic and portentous hulk, a thin wisp of steam hums from a pipe, and hangs across the vessel, a white wraith. Yet the hum of the steam is too subdued a sound in the palpable and oppressive dusk to be significant. Then a boatswain's pipe rends the heavy dark like the gleam of a sword, and a great voice, awed by nothing, roars from the steamer's bridge. There is a sudden commotion, we hear the voice again, and answering cries, and by us, towards the black chasm of the River in which hover groups of moving planets, the mass of the steamer glides, its pale funnel mounting over us like a column. Out she goes, turning broadside on, a shadow sprinkled with stars, then makes slow way downstream, a travelling constellation, occulting one after the other all the fixed lights.'

Up against these creations of man, and able to destroy them both, rises the inhospitable sea, and the sea is Mr. Tomlinson's theme as the River is its overture. Only one actual voyage is described, and that is merely a trip in a trawler to the Dogger. There is another and almost a phantom adventure in the tropics. But as this is more in Mr. Conrad's style than Mr. Tomlinson's, I shall take leave to set *Off Shore* before *The Ship-Runners*. For that is an author's strength which is entirely or peculiarly his own. Mr. Conrad is a great master of tragic irony, set in a spacious frame of remote and almost inhuman adventure. Mr. Tomlinson's genius is more intimate and cheerfully affectionate. A sense of the humorous play of life, linked to a close and retentive observa-

tion of it in action, stamps him of the comic spirit. The quality the two writers share is their distinction as lovers and celebrants of the sea. Mr. Conrad comes of a nation of landsmen; and it is one of the marvels of literature that, joining himself to a sea-faring folk, he should at once have stepped to an almost vacant throne as the prose-poet of their maritime life. Let the reader of *A Shipping Parish* and *Off Shore* say whether Mr. Tomlinson has not earned an Englishman's right to a place by his side. For generations thousands of young East and West Anglians have looked out from their cliffs and headlands on one of the most beautiful sights on earth, a barque or a full-rigged ship under sail. But it rarely occurred to them to describe it. There is now no necessity for them to try. Mr. Tomlinson was born in Poplar to do it for them.

From the 'Nation' of March 12, 1921.

NOTE

It may be objected that this study is a little slight, but to read my father on a writer of so very different a quality as Mr. Tomlinson makes the criticism too interesting to be passed over. My father had none of that element of the 'curious' in his work which he remarks upon in Mr. Tomlinson. One is inclined to place him with writers like Browne, Fuller and Burton, except that he is more direct and human than they are, and inspired with a passionate irony and fierce hatred of war. But he is a 'curious' writer – that exactly describes him, and to be 'curious' in this sense is to possess an authentic imaginative vision and most taking originality. As both he and H. W. M. went through the war- and after-war mill together, so shall they appear in these pages.—H.J.M.

E. M. FORSTER AND INDIA

Some critics have admired the æsthetic and spiritual qualities of Mr. Forster's book.[1] They have given an alluring picture of the delicacy and complexity of its structure, built up in 'arch beyond arch' of individual and personal and political relationships. But on the actual subject of his work, beyond side references to the fact that it dealt with India, with the politics of Anglo-India, with Nationalist India, and with the visit of two English ladies to India, few have thrown any light whatever. For all that one could tell, Mr. Forster might have written in a sketchy-spiritual way anything about India that had come into his head to write.

Now, this habit of our latter-day critics of writing on literature as if its form-pattern, or its spiritual rhythm, and not its meaning and content, were the most important thing about it, is very characteristic of them, and it is quite true that Mr. Forster's wonderful style offers itself to this kind of admiration. He has the modern writer's gift of analysis, of spiritual discernment of the concealed or half-concealed sides of human nature. The irony of the contrast between what we say and even think, and the dark current of instinctive life that flows on beneath all this seeming, presses on his mind, just as it presses on the sterile, not to say the malign, genius of Mr. D. H. Lawrence. He has the art of presenting both the thoughts of men and the scenes in which they develop – witness the brilliant descriptions of the trial at Chandrapore and the festival of Krishna in Mau, the Indian State. And his detail is at once rich and curious. None of his contemporaries has a finer power of suggesting the colour and movement of life, and can be at once so disdainful and so sympathetic about it.

Nevertheless, it is just as informing to talk merely of the beautiful manner in which *A Passage to India* is written as it would be to remark of the *Decline and Fall* that 'Mr. Gibbon had composed a wonderful architectural work on the early and late Roman Empire'. Gibbon, of course, had the most definite thing to say about Imperial and Christian Rome,

[1] *A Passage to India.* By E. M. Forster. (Arnold.)

and he took care to say in on nearly every one of his thousands of crowded pages. In the same way, Mr. Forster has something extremely pointed to say about India, and he says it directly and passionately, or ironically and suggestively, just as the current of his thought sweeps him along.

That is by no means to say that he has written a pamphlet. *A Passage to India* is, indeed, a satire of contrasts, much in the same sense that the *Voyage to Lilliput* is a satire of contrasts. As Swift sets against the grossness of Gulliver the pettiness of the race of little men, so Mr. Forster portrays the supersensitiveness, the impulsiveness, the charm and the weakness, of Mohammedan and Hindu India, in order to emphasize the honesty, the arrogance, the intellectual shallowness, the physical courage and the moral tremors of the governing caste, in all its haughty and unimaginative segregation. In effect, the book is addressed to the Dyers and the O'Dwyers of India, and to those who keep up the political repute of these people in this country. It says: 'Keep your bad manners if you will, but realize that they are losing you India, if they have not already lost it'. Only all this is said or inferred in the manner of the artist, not of the didactic writer. The latter can bring theory, rhetoric, argument, into the case. The artist can only contribute his love or his æsthetic and moral aversions.

Now Mr. Forster's temperament draws him towards native India, as it draws him away from the temper and spirit of Anglo-Indianism. Thus the exquisite picture of Dr. Aziz is touched with sympathy, as the picture of Major Callendar is deeply bitten with disdain. But both sketches are in proportion. Mr. Forster knows well where the weakness of a non-English India, an India from which we had withdrawn in anger or despair, would be – an India in which the affinities and repulsions of Professor Godbole, the Brahman, met the affinities and repulsions of Dr. Aziz, the Mohammedan, without the screen of British indifference thrown between them. And he seems – perhaps he only seems – to suggest that if such Englishmen as Mr. Fielding and such Englishwomen as Mrs. Moore could have their say, the irreconcilable might be reconciled, the all-but-impossible accomplished.

But Mr. Forster's serio-comic picture of the India of to-day is not of a thing that can last. It is the image of a phantasm, almost a joke of the Time-spirit. If India is governed from the bridge-tables and tennis-courts of Chandrapore – well, the day is coming when she will be so no longer.

This, then, is the theme of *A Passage to India*. Its illustration is in the main through a single piece of portraiture. Dr. Aziz, the victim of an hysterical woman and an equally hysterical society, is also the hero of the story. He is imagined in such a glow of feeling and drawn with such delicacy of touch that it seems natural to guess an original. But it is clear that Mr. Forster means us to take him for a good deal – not all – of India. In the rich profusion and confusion of her creeds and loyalties he stands out for something tangible, to be apprehended with sympathy and won, as far as India is to be won at all, with a price. Mrs. Moore wins him in a moment, with a single touch of spiritual generosity. The Collector and the 'Bridge Party' lose him again, it seems for ever. Mr. Fielding attempts a recapture, and the effort fails, because both men feel that the time of Anglo-Indian reconciliation is not yet. There is too much between – too little character and clear purpose on the one side, not enough understanding on the other. Perhaps when the problem of Krishna and his worship, the problem of Professor Godbole and his food, and the problem of 'Ronny' and his rawness, have all been solved together, the peacemakers can begin to talk.

Therefore it is not enough to ignore the subject of Mr. Forster's story, and to content oneself with its delicate ornament. Yet it is true to say that its charm lies equally in its precision of detail, and in the way in which, when once the vivid impression of reality is attained, the study as a whole recedes into a mystical background, where the half-revealed forces have their play – the dim prophecies and blank misgivings of Mrs. Moore, the ecstasies and (to the European mind) the absurdities of the Brahman, to whom mere happenings are nothing, and 'whose conversations frequently culminated in a cow'. Obviously, the Anglo-Indian scene is a tangle of such obscure and warring spiritualities as these. But it is also a little absurd. Absurd are the Collector and

the frightened gathering in the Chandrapore Club, scenting a second Mutiny because Miss Quested has an attack of nerves:—

'People drove into the club with studious calm – the jogtrot of country gentlefolk between green hedgerows, for the natives must not suspect that they were agitated. They exchanged the usual drinks, but everything tasted different, and then they looked out at the palisade of purple cactuses, stabbing the purple throat of the sky; they realized that they were thousands of miles from any scenery that they understood. The club was fuller than usual, and several parents had brought their children into the rooms reserved for adults, which gave the air of the Residency at Lucknow. One young mother – a brainless but most beautiful girl – sat on a low ottoman in the smoking-room with her baby in her arms; her husband was away in the district, and she dared not return to her bungalow in case the "niggers attacked". The wife of a small railway official, she was generally snubbed; but this evening, with her abundant figure and masses of corn-gold hair, she symbolized all that is worth fighting and dying for – more permanently a symbol, perhaps, than poor Adela. "Don't worry, Mrs. Blakiston; those drums are only Mohurram", the men would tell her. "Then they've started", she moaned, clasping the infant to her breast, and rather wishing he would not blow bubbles down his chin at such a moment as this. "No, of course not; and anyhow, they're not coming to the Burra Sahib's bungalow either, my dear, and that's where you and your baby'll sleep to-night", answered Mrs. Turton, towering by her side like Pallas Athene, and determined in the future not to be such a snob.'

Absurd, too, is Aziz himself, melting in a moment when the governing caste behaves a little decently to him, and blazing up into wrath as it falls back to its habitual mood of cold intolerance. Mr. Forster's conclusion is, perhaps, a little difficult to state. Fear, and the concealment of thought that fear brings, govern, to his mind, the whole Anglo-Indian relationship. The Indian dreads the fury of a second

Amritsar. The Englishman knows himself hated, a stranger in an unknown and a complicated land, and feels that the hatred is unjust. Reconciliation might come through love and understanding. But how can India understand our shy, distant race? And what is an Englishman to make of a people that bows down to the strangest of idols, and yet somehow enjoys the easy and scandalous intimacy with Godhood which Mr. Forster describes in his brilliant picture of the celebration of the Birth of Krishna?

'Some of the villagers thought the Birth had occurred, saying with truth that the Lord must have been born, or they could not see Him. But the clock struck midnight, and simultaneously the rending note of the conch broke forth, followed by the trumpeting of elephants; all who had brought packets of powder threw them at the altar, and in the rosy dust and incense, and clanging and shouts, Infinite Love took upon itself the form of SHRI KRISHNA, and saved the world. All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars; all became joy, all laughter; there had never been disease nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear. Some jumped in the air, others flung themselves prone and embraced the bare feet of the universal lover; the little girl slipped out and danced by herself, her black pigtails flying. Not an orgy of the body, the tradition of the shrine forbade it. But the human spirit had tried by a desperate contortion to ravish the unknown, flinging down science and history in the struggle; yes, beauty herself.'

Alas! it seems impossible for an Englishman (unless he is a Scotchman) to enjoy God. But it ought to be within his competence to begin to realize what a task the Indian spirit has laid upon him, and to resort to such interpreters of it as the author of *A Passage to India*.

From the 'New Leader' of June 27, 1924.

NOTE

Yet is not H. W. M. a little too tender to Dr. Aziz, more tender than his spiritual creator, who saw in his nerveless

'hero' the nemesis of the imposition of an alien civilization upon his race? One wonders which is the stronger condemnation of that imposition, the seeing of the human symbol of India as an ennobled victim – or a ruin.

I have made a few alterations in the opening paragraph of this piece, because of its references to a certain review of Mr. Forster's book.—H.J.M.

DEAD SOULS

STRAYING from the wilderness that we call London to the society to which we rightly affix the name of 'the country', I beguiled the leisure it gave with the help of an old friend of mine, Gogol's *Dead Souls*. And, incidentally, the re-perusal of that wonderful book awoke in me an accustomed reflection – whether it is ever possible to tell the truth about men in any other way than by a parable. We know that that was the resort of Jesus, of the Buddha, of Socrates-Plato – in fact, of all the original teachers of religion. And, coming a little lower down, we find the same disposition to indirectness in the intellectuals as in the seers. The great observer of life is bound to hide his discoveries about it in an imaginative, a fictitious, dress. Necessarily there is loss in the method. The meaning of the parable escapes the heavy ear; puzzles the simple intelligence. But I fancy that something is always retained; and that, comparing the direct with the hinted monition, the Sermon on the Mount with the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the latter has the more intimate and fruitful history. Both the tenderest and the most horrible things have a veil over them that cannot be rudely withdrawn. Our lips are sealed; the 'sub-conscious' lays its merciful hand upon them.

*

There is a more earthly reason for this reticence. Often the truth-teller cannot speak plainly when he would. Rabelais could only say what he wanted about the corruption of the Church by sending the average sensual man into fits of laughter over it. Even Voltaire dared not be as plain about the vileness of Governments as he wanted to be. Swift was in still harder case. He was an Irishman, and a *parvenu*; his own feet sunk deep in the mire of eighteenth-century politics. He must disguise his savage indignation, or it would slay him. Events, too, overpower the critical intelligence. The world is strong and self-assured; it is lonely, weak, timid. What German, Frenchman, Italian, Englishman, realizing the atrocity of the Great War, could find means to say what he thought of it? Even the parable was scented out by the witch-finders of the

State; the plain word never had a chance to fly beyond the guarded prison-bars.

*

All this may seem a long way from Gogol's *Dead Souls;* but I place that book nearly at the head of those half-revealing, half-concealing criticisms of society in which the thinker asserts himself, and confounds the folly of his times. It is said that the theme of *Dead Souls*, as of the equally astonishing *Revizor*, is Russia. It is. But it is almost as pertinent to remark that the subject is the corruption of government and of the soul of civilization. Gogol was one of the wittiest writers that ever lived. But, unlike Dickens, wit was his servant, not his master; held in a kind of lively subjection to his purpose, instead of frisking loose over the imaginative plain. The Russian author never allows you to think he is merely amusing you, though he does this very well. On the contrary, this incomparable artist, his brush flying over an immense canvas, means you to realize first of all that he is painting a picture of human weakness and cruelty; and of the weakness and cruelty of slavery in particular. Mrs. Stowe painted such a picture to enlighten the eyes of a sophisticated, hypocritical society. But *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a pamphlet; Gogol's *Dead Souls* is an immortal representation. Any intelligent man reading it, and carrying his mind forward to the later critical work of Turgeniev, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, Tchehov, Gorki, can fit the Russia of 1836 into the Russia of 1921. Plant idleness, selfishness, theft, knavery, in a soil where every growth is a giant, and feed them with a system of agrarian and household slavery. Then see them all rot, and finally kindle to the spark of the Communist conflagration. This is what Gogol reveals in his drawing of a rascally official, scouring Russia to make a little money out of a speculation in dead serfs.

*

Dead Souls is such a lavish entertainment that it is not easy to select the choicest of its offerings. But observe the irony of this passage, in which Tchitchikoff is bargaining for a consignment of 'dead souls' with a landowner who haggles to get the price of live ones:

'"For my part [says Tchitchikoff] I place my hand on my heart, and suggest that eighty copecks apiece would be a very handsome sum."

'"The idea! eighty copecks!"

'"Well, in my judgment it is impossible to offer more."

'"*But I am not selling shoes.*"

'"*Well, you must acknowledge that you are not selling men either.*"

'"And so you think you have found a fool, who will sell you a duly registered soul for eighty copecks?"

'"But permit me. Surely those serfs died long ago, and all that remains of them is merely a name, barely perceptible to the senses."'

There follows a wonderful reminiscence of the characters and trade-worth of these dead serfs, which I have no space to quote. As a moral analysis of slave-owning that one page is worth all *Uncle Tom's* pathetic pages put together.

From 'Wayfarer' in the 'Nation' of September 10, 1921.

NOTE

It is curious that Erasmus is not mentioned among the great writers who aim obliquely at society and government. *The Praise of Folly* and *The Complaint of Peace* were two books that H. W. M. adored, and it nearly came to a coldness between him and Dr. Orchard, one of his dearest friends, when the latter raised a morally sententious voice against the glorious creature. Of Dr. Orchard himself, with whom my father agreed and as strongly disagreed, he wrote in a private letter: 'There aren't many good people in the world, and O. is certainly one of them.'—H.J.M.

PART FIVE: DRAMATIC CRITICISM

H. W. MASSINGHAM

BY

BERNARD SHAW

H. W. MASSINGHAM

BY

BERNARD SHAW

SOMETIME in the eighteen-eighties I became conscious of H. W. Massingham in the journalistic world. Of our first meeting I have no recollection. I was certainly not introduced to him: he arises in my memory as a person known to me quite intimately, and often called The Boy. The name was not suggested by his bodily build; for at that time the slenderness and fragility of his later time was covered up by big high shoulders into which his cheeks sank readily when his unsleeping sense of humor set him chuckling; and his shirt front seemed at least twice as broad as anyone else's when he was in evening dress. But he was always what we call youthful, in virtue of a quality which is certainly not youth at all, as it is proof against years. But we call it so; and the term will serve. There are people who are born forty, and die forty plus some years of decay. There are people who are born twenty and do not grow up. Massingham was one of the young ones: he never became venerable or stiff or solemn; and he never ceased to chuckle. He was physically thinskinned (I remember his shrieks when a friendly cat once fleshed its claws on his knee with a fearful facility of laceration), and mentally fine to a degree most unusual in his profession.

He must have formed the incurable habit of journalism, which may be defined as the habit of stating public problems without ever having time to solve them, very early in life; for he was quite well qualified to write books, and might have been a notable author, much as a station master at one of the great European railway centres might be a notable traveller if he were not too busy despatching trains to all the cities of the earth ever to visit them himself. As far as I know, he never wrote a book or a play, nor even tried to. He knew nothing of those dull and dreadful moments when the writer of books sits down to his desk and wonders what story to spin out of

his unfurnished entrails. To Massingham the world daily handed endless stores of material with both hands, material that played vigorously on his alert political sympathies, on his unfailing interest in contemporary life, and on his sense of humor. To him the stuff of fiction was too insipid, too unreal, too hackneyed, to nerve him to pen a line: it was much better fun making Campbell-Bannerman Prime Minister than helping a fictitious long lost earl to his coronet in the last chapter of a novel which he could not have endured to read if in a moment of aberration he had succeeded in writing it. He was an enthusiastic amateur of literature, and a first rate critic of it and of the theatre as well as of parliament; but it must have been apparent to him that his work as a journalist required much more ability, knowledge of the world, and skill with the pen than ordinary fiction, and that the extraordinary writers who were his heroes were really great journalists whose journalism was too good for any newspaper to make its living by. The technical proof that he was not condemned to editorship by inability to succeed as an author is that he proved himself one of the best feuilletonists in London. I was a feuilletonist myself almost exclusively; and he was the only editor who could do my job as well as his own. The feuilletonist is the man who can write a couple of thousand words once a week in such a manner that everyone will read it for its own sake, whether specially interested or not in its subject, which may be politics, literature, music, painting, fashion, sport or gossip at large. Many able editors can no more do this than the Archbishop of Canterbury can preach Billy Sunday's sermons. But Massingham could. His parliamentary feuilletons, his occasional theatre feuilletons, and finally his Wayfarer gossip feuilletons were as good as any written in his time by men who made feuilleton writing their sole work in journalism.

Of course he paid for all this exciting activity, and the influence and interesting acquaintances it brought him. Editing, especially daily editing, involves a great deal of drudgery, mitigated only by the impossibility of spending enough time on each job, since the clock is racing the editor all the time, and the leading article, well or ill written, must be ready for the newspaper trains. The physical strain is not mitigated at

all; and Massingham, like Voltaire, was never quite well for a week together.

Then there was the disability I have already mentioned: the provisional solutions or no solutions at all of the political problems of the day. Political warfare is like military warfare: no journalist can keep up with it. During the war of 1914–18 I tried to keep up with the race of events. It was quite impossible. Long before I could form a considered judgment and write it carefully down the situation had changed, and what I had written was hopelessly out of date.

There is another element of impermanence in journalism. In the party warfare of parliament as in the field, we have to make the best of the commanders we can get. Kitcheners and Joffres have to be upheld and encouraged in terms that would provoke contradiction if applied to Alexanders and Napoleons. When a Cabinet has to be formed the case is worse; for the Kitcheners and Joffres, having at least gone through the military mill from their lieutenancy upward, know their business technically; but the British politician need neither know his job scientifically nor even be an adept in its procedure. Massingham had more than once to back ambitioners who let him down pretty badly; and on such occasions he did not hesitate to let them know it.

In the end these disappointments of his might have claimed that they beat him out of every paper he edited. They beat him out of *The Star*, only to find him in a stronger position editing *The Daily Chronicle*. They beat him out of *The Daily Chronicle* into weekly journalism as editor of *The Nation*. And they finally beat him out of *The Nation* when he was too old to face another editorship. At least that is one way of summarizing his career; and it is an important one as an illustration of the final control of the press by those whose power has hardly any effective check on it except newspaper criticism. But as it took the politicians a long time to discover that they could not buy Massingham; and as it also took Massingham, politically suckled in an outwearing creed, a long time to discover that they were hopeless, he was never silenced, though he was always going to be. He ran his full career as a journalist; and the fact that he was driven from Stonecutter Street to White-

friars Street, and from Whitefriars Street to Adelphi Terrace – less than ten minutes' walk both times – really made no difference in his total output or in his effect on public opinion. Thus his defeats were not fatal: they were the evidences of his integrity.

To have a career in politics under our party system a man must have his price; and it must be the standard price of putting party before everything, denouncing fiercely every leader and every measure on the other side even when your side has just lost an election by advocating it with your hearty support. Nobody ever dreamt of pressing the grosser forms of corruption on Massingham; but this established one was pressed on him as the obvious duty of an English gentleman and loyal supporter of his party. It never occurred to him to pay it: his pride, enormous and unconscious, would not tolerate it. When some leader had gained his enthusiastic support by advocating the reforms that all leaders advocate in Opposition, and proved no exception to the rule that no leader advocates them in office, Massingham would fall slaughterously on him, and set the financial backers of the paper demanding why Liberal leaders were being attacked in a Liberal paper, and what party the editor thought he belonged to, anyhow.

On the whole, by sheer talent and character, Massingham had a pretty good run, not only as a journalist but as a martyr who always rose from his ashes with ludicrous promptitude and success. What really handicapped him and yet helped him (all helps are handicaps too) was that in his politics he was a transition journalist, and that the transition was for him a development of Liberalism as the specifically progressive force in politics into Socialism as the next step ahead. This estranged him at once from the spirit of the old essentially anti-Socialist Liberalism and the new essentially Marxian Socialism which regarded the change, not as a development of Liberalism, but as a complete repudiation of it. Massingham would laugh at the bourgeoisie as heartily as Molière or Dickens, and be hotly indignant at its bigotries and snobberies and muddles and mismanagements; but he had not the Marxian abhorrence of the whole bourgeois epoch, and the Marxian conviction that a radically different culture must replace its outlook on life.

In his view, to despair of Liberalism politically was to despair of humanity, because he could see no hope in any Marxian leadership known to him. Thus in a certain altercation with Hyndman, the Socialist leader (with whom discussion generally ended in altercation), his final shot was 'You are the most entirely negligible man in England', which was true in a parliamentary sense, just as it would have been true of Marx himself, but hardly so in a seriously political one, as the Russian Revolution presently proved.

In the end, when the Labor Party became established in parliament, and developed a new *personelle*, Massingham calmly took *The Nation* over to it, and made the paper the organ of a fierce attack on French Imperialism, coupled with the name of M. Poincaré, and, on occasion, with that of Mr. Lloyd George, who, in spite of his exploits in Coalition, still ranked confusedly as a Liberal asset. Now *The Nation*, though artistically and journalistically entirely a creation of Massingham's, was financed by Liberal money to be a Liberal organ; and he found for the third time that they who pay the piper will finally call the tune, however masterfully the piper may play.

There was another weakness in his position. Party warfare is very newsy. When the parliamentary warfare flags there is always plenty of personal gossip to go on with. But warfare for Socialist principles will not keep a journal going with fresh material when it is so much in the air as it was during most of Massingham's time. Even a parish magazine cannot live on the creeds; and when an editor has stated his position in principle fifty times without echo or controversy in parliament, the problem of how to keep the paper alive, fresh, and in the movement becomes almost insoluble. Some time before his last displacement Massingham, discussing this difficulty with me, said that he and his devoted staff had said all they had to say, and said it too often. We repeated the usual commonplaces about new departures and new blood; but we knew that this was useless: the paper, already ahead of events, could do nothing but mark time until events caught up. As it happened, they caught up (by the advent of a Labor Government) just too late to save the situation for him. Had he been

a younger man this would have been very hard luck. As it was, it happened in the nick of time: he could not have begun life again as a Labor journalist. He had not gone stale: he was youthful to the last; but his number was up: he was dying.

Massingham lived so eagerly in the present, and was so full of all sorts of public and cultural interests, that he never reminisced or talked about himself. Well as I knew him, especially in his later years in the Adelphi, where he so often came upstairs to lunch with us, I knew very little about him except what I saw. I gathered that he was an East Anglian; and I wondered that Norfolk had produced so supple and susceptible a mind and temperament until I discovered that his suppleness did not prevent his being extremely obstinate. He always held on to a position for weeks after it had become obviously untenable. I am aware somehow that he was not his mother's pet son, and that there was a sort of feud between them; but this situation appealed to his sense of humor rather than to any kind of rancor in him. He told me that as a boy he had been engaged in the class wars of juvenile gentry and proletariat, and had at first suffered agonies of terror, but had got over them and acquired an insatiable taste for this sort of street fighting.

We occasionally made Sunday morning excursions of a kind then in vogue among journalists. They had a double object: first, to walk four miles from home and thus become *bona fide* travellers in the legal sense, entitled to obtain drinks as such, and, second, to buy a copy of *The Observer*. This was pure tradition; for I was a teetotaller; and Massingham, though convivial enough, was no toper. I only once saw him intoxicated (drunk is hardly the word); and then he was in the wildest high spirits, and had to be restrained from dropping over the bannisters in his soaring disdain for the stairs. But this was at one of those dreadful men's dinner parties at which all the guests get drunk to save themselves from going melancholy mad.

As to *The Observer*, it was very different then from the Garvinian *Observer* of to-day. It cost fourpence; and its sale was a superstition from the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71, when, as it happened, some big battles were fought at the end

of the week. *The Observer* had a good foreign news service, and thus made itself indispensable on Sunday to all journalists, and in all the clubs and country houses and rectories where political news still meant diplomatic and military news. The habit thus established persisted; so that long after the Franco-Prussian war had faded into a reminiscence of our boyhood Massingham would solemnly waste fourpence every Sunday morning on *The Observer* when any of the penny weeklies would have served him better. The revival of *The Observer* by Mr. Garvin after some rather desperate vicissitudes is one of the great journalistic feats of our time.

During one of these walks Massingham told me the story of his brother's startling end. He regarded this as something that he never spoke of to anybody; and he soon forgot having spoken of it to me. All men have certain sacred subjects which they firmly believe they never mention to a living soul, though as a matter of fact they mention them sooner or later to their more intimate and congenial friends. Some time afterwards I made unscrupulous use of this confidence at a bogus spiritualistic séance to which I treated a friend of ours with whom we were spending a week-end. He had expressed himself so contemptuously about people who believed in such things that I thought it allowable to demonstrate to him that he himself could be taken in with the utmost ease. One of my earliest steps in the demonstration was to call up a spirit who, after admitting that he was a relative of someone present, gradually eliminated, question by question, myself, our host, and every possible relationship except that of brother to Massingham, who was so visibly and unmistakably upset by this communication that I was rather shocked by the success of my own trick. As to our host, it was impossible for him, after seeing Massingham change color as he did, to doubt his entire good faith; and this was his undoing; for when, as usually happens, he made Massingham hold me hand and foot on one side whilst he did the same on the other, the rappings and other phenomena proceeded as impressively as ever. Of course what happened was what always happens on these occasions. I took Massingham into my confidence without a word by working away with the foot he was supposed to be holding

down; and he, much relieved and enormously amused, threw himself ecstatically into the game, and was presently treating our host to manifestations on which I should never have ventured. All professional mediums know that if they can only get hold of one of these stories that the teller regards as never told, and his friends nevertheless know by heart, they need not be afraid of the amateur detectives he will set on them, as none of them ever resist the temptation to become confederates.

I knew nothing of the external circumstances of Massingham's life except what I saw. I knew his mind; and, I repeat, his mind was far too active and comprehensive to be occupied with himself or with the past. He changed very little. A country house, two marriages, and a family of children who all grew up graver, more posed, more serious than himself, made no mark whatever on him: he carried them with all his old combination of levity of mood with hectically fierce fits of political conviction, and was easily first juvenile among them to the day of his death.

As I write these lines comes the news of the death of our friend and contemporary William Archer. The two vacant places seem to make a prodigious gap in the surviving front rank of late Victorian journalism. But Archer, like myself, was a journalist only, inasmuch as he wrote for the papers to boil his pot. Massingham was the perfect master journalist: the born editor without whom such potboiling would have been for many of us a much poorer and more sordid business. If he had left behind him a single book it would have spoilt the integrity of his career and of his art. I hope I have made it clear that this was his triumph, not his shortcoming. I could lay my hand more readily on ten contributors for his successor than on one successor for his contributors. A first rate editor is a very rare bird indeed: two or three to a generation, in contrast to swarms of authors, is as much as we get; and Massingham was in the first of that very select flight.

G. B. S

THE FAITH OF A FRENCH INTELLECTUAL

I THINK if I were a director of propaganda, sacred or profane, I should not enrol M. Claudel among my missionaries *in partibus*. I should be afraid that he would be rather too clever. Between the ardour of his faith and the subtlety of his intellect he would expose too many of the mysteries and keep most of the graces to himself. And by such methods I should be inclined to doubt whether he would ever secure a convert. His success in making Catholicism repulsive is as undoubted as his skill in reducing it to a logical form. But as in the process of assuring the soul's peace he reduces it to a desert, I should, I think, select him for a special evangelist to Bolshevism, and watch with interest the result. Take his *Hostage*, which was wonderfully produced by the Pioneers.[1] A friend of mine suggests that if the Church had been wise, *L'Otage* would long ago have been placed on the Index. For in these days it does not seem advisable to suggest that the Church is even a greater tyrant than the State, and that its heaviest penalties are reserved for its most faithful souls. That, in the idealistic sense of which M. Claudel is a singularly perverse interpreter, may be true enough. But M. Claudel claims for the Church the right to make martyrs for its political no less than for its spiritual aims, and assumes its politics to be those of Louis XVIII in 1814. Is that a heresy? I should have thought it was. Certainly a good deal of pious Catholicism has striven to make it so.

For the entire art of the play is to depict, with delicate and prolonged cruelty, the depravation of a soul. At whose hands? Those of the Church, whose mission is to save souls, not to damn them. Sygne de Coûfontaine is simply laid on the altar, like Iphigenia, and the fire kindled around her by priestly hands. To what end? M. Claudel defaces history in order to fashion one. He creates an absurd and unhistorical crisis by figuring Pius VII as in peril of recapture or death by Napoleon after an imagined flight from his captivity at Fontainebleau. Therefore, as Turelure, the odious Prefect of the

[1] *L'Otage*. By Paul Claudel.

Marne, has discovered the secret, and demanded Sygne's hand as the price of his silence, she must be sacrificed. Pius himself is not consulted, and, in fact, it was Napoleon who was in danger, and the Pope's great act of passive resistance which was shaking his gimcrack Empire to its fall. M. Claudel is alive to the fineness of Pius's character, and it is one of the many inconsistencies of the play that he feels himself constrained to make him a Christian – a real Christian. Why, then, must poor Sygne be tortured and ruined? To prove M. Claudel's thesis. And M. Claudel's thesis is that of absolute obedience to the spiritual authority. It is no good destroying Sygne, yet that is the point of the play. You merely tear an exquisite thing in pieces – a lovely, Christian soul – for nothing that could not have happened as the inexorable web of events spun itself out. Sygne is snatched from her Legitimist lover; well, the portly Louis was bound to come to his own again. She is married to a low, scheming brute, that he may the more quickly betray his master. But in 1814 a hundred Turelures were ready to betray Napoleon. All that happens is that Sygne herself is lost; one more pearl cast on the rubbish-heap of the Church's political failures. It is not surprising that M. Claudel, hampered with such a dramatic scheme, should be unable to pursue it poetically, as he opens it, and closes it on a scene of rather absurd melodrama. Therein compare *L'Otage* with *Brand*. Ibsen's idealist is borne on steady pinions through the eternal snows up through the infinite azure of the ideal. Absolute negation is his lot, as that of Sygne. God is all; the world has been emptied into nothingness. But Sygne is merely prostituted, muddied over, and killed. For what? To prove the divine wisdom of the Church, her long-sightedness, and her right to claim the fairest of the sons and daughters of men. But what Church? The Church of S. Francis and S. Thomas? Not at all. The Church of the Boulevard S. Germain.

That is M. Claudel's dramatic idea. The extremity of his decadence and that of his school is seen in the ruthlessness of his picture of the martyrdom of Sygne at the hands of her confessor. He *means* to exhibit an outraged woman; to show you devotion spurned at the foot of the Cross, and a lamb asking pity at the hands of the Good Shepherd, and asking it

in vain. This is modern French intellectualism, a horrible, and also a futile thing, for as long as such profanities are allowed to be spoken in the name of the Roman Church, so long will her natural grace be obscured, and the successive revolts of the liberal spirit seem more than justified. Exhibit such a play, and ninety-nine people out of a hundred will be horrified. The hundredth will say: 'Yes, it is quite right; the individual is nothing; the cause everything. Of course you must do wrong that right may come, and be untrue even to your higher self, so that the highest may be served. Of course (as in war), you may take the "No" out of the Commandments, so that your pastors and masters may be the better able to keep the "Yes" in the Creed'. But M. Claudel is perverse enough to alienate even that kind of intellectual approbation. For Sygne is dragged to the embrace of her disgusting mate only that the Legitimist-Catholic cause shall be served (as in the sequel to the play it is served) by a child who inherits his mother's revolt and his father's corruption. For the Church, therefore, nothing is saved; she has merely carried on tradition, and made a barren and unintelligent assertion of her spiritual 'rights'. Her net loss is the individual soul of Sygne. Sygne is a conscientious objector against the violation of her body and the destruction of her spirit. As a Christian she was right to object; to deny her confessor's right to save the Pope's life or his liberty at the price of her soul. And she was right on the facts. For in the end her entire self-surrender puts the crown not so much on Louis's head as on that of Turelure, murderer of monks and double apostate. It does more. It ruins her cousin spiritually, and in his hopes as a crusader of the Church and of the Legitimist cause. Georges, deserted and despairing, kills her and himself. Sygne, bereft of faith, hope, and love, refuses the last absolving rites of the Church. Georges renounces Louis, the compromising king, and Louis's political god. Alone Turelure, the god of this world, stands erect and triumphant. The rest is not silence, but chaos. The good human will is destroyed; nothing remains in which the divine spirit can find a home.

M. Claudel is an artist, and the perverse logic of his conception is wrought to the last detail of malicious piety. Mon-

sieur Badillon, the confessor, who, with gentle cunning, draws Sygne into the net of her renunciation; Georges, the narrow enthusiast; the brutal Turelure and the gentle Pius; and Sygne herself, fine flower of the Catholic faith, are all studies, not, indeed, of humanity, but of human types necessary to the elaboration of M. Claudel's dramatic scheme. As with the author, so with the artists. If Mr. Brember Wills's Pope was beautifully finished work, Mr. Fisher White's Father Badillon was equally accomplished, and of still greater subtlety, for if it is not easy to represent a saint, it is more difficult still to make a suitable combination of sanctity and cruelty. Mr. White did all that M. Claudel could have asked him to do, and Miss Sybil Thorndyke seemed to me to do even more. Since the days of Duse I have seen nothing like her scene of agony before the crucifix. Rarely is a young artist able to open the deeper fountains of human grief and pour out their waters in the abandonment of its appeal. Work so refined, so exquisitely interpretative, and so highly emotional, should raise Miss Thorndyke to the top of her profession. M. Claudel does not fall behind with his conception. He comprehends its horror and permits no touch of commonness to the priest who gently pushes his spiritual child to her doom. Miss Thorndyke's intelligence was as equal to the strain put upon it as were her physical resources, and no higher praise could be given. Nothing so remarkable as this play has been seen in London for many a year, nor so much power and skill displayed in the art of representation.

From the 'Nation' of March 29, 1919.

NOTE

Apart from the sureness of the dissection, this criticism is particularly interesting as the only example we have of the writer's view of the younger French school whose names are much in the mouths of the literary lionkins who foregather in the dense scrub of Gerrard Street.

One of the letters is about the play, and I will quote it for a sidelight on his great love for Ibsen's *Brand* (obviously a play after his own heart) and as a good example of his swift and leprechaunish changes of mood.

'I've been much excited over a horrible French play of Claudel's that they did at the Pioneers on Sunday. It's a kind of wicked Roman idealism, but wonderfully written. It's quite worth while getting it (*L'Otage* – Paul Claudel) and comparing it with *Brand*, the noblest of modern poetic dramas. But don't let either play make you dizzy. *Brand* has been well translated by C. H. Herford, if you don't happen to have read it. It will make you weep – bucket-fulls – it does me. Having done it, you can read the Falstaff scenes in Henry IV as a pick-me-up.'—H.J.M.

THE IMMORTAL SNOB

THERE is an interesting description in the *Times* by Mr. Walter Harris, of what he calls the 'vast, inappropriate, and expensive conglomerations of useless and inartistic trash', which the half-deposed Sultan of Morocco accumulated in his palace of Fez. It consists, according to Mr. Harris, of a great assemblage of refuse, including:

'a studio packed from floor to ceiling with warped cameras and decaying photographic materials; a state coach, moth-eaten within, which the damp and rain of three years have almost turned to pulp . . . an enormous collection of biograph films, many of subjects which the London County Council would never permit in London; cases of imaginary and fantastic uniforms invented and evolved by expensive tailors; stores full of broken mechanical toys . . . ladies' underclothing and false hair; pianos, harmoniums, and street organs; stuffed birds, and a thousand other miscellaneous atrocities, one and all corrupted by moth and dust, eaten by rats, and covered by mildew and cobwebs'.

Mutato nomine, this is a truthful catalogue of the material of which the fashionable British drama is largely made up. Every season scores of new plays appear, produced at enormous expense, stuffed with the dresses and furniture of the hour, filled with its slang, echoing its gramophone thought. Thousands of articles appear, criticizing these works, praising them, discussing them at enormous length. Inexhaustible as is this product, it has one characteristic. Born of the hour, it perishes with the hour. A few months cover it, like the rubbish-heap in the Sultan's palace, with 'moth and rust'; and the interminable procession of shadows – Merry Widows and Belles of New York, Mimosa Maids and Muscular Christians, Toddleses, Explorers, Flag Lieutenants, Prisoners of Zenda – vanishes like the figures on a bioscope; to give place to other figures similarly constructed. As with the season's plays, so with its songs and its books. All are constructed on a few models, like the women's hats from Paris. Some show a cer-

tain degree of adaptive or imitative skill. But nearly all minister alike to pride, sensuality, or *ennui*; despise Nature and Truth; are unfeeling, or shallow-feeling; are utterly bad as art.

And now and then, in the midst of this *brouhaha* of nonsense, there appears some profound and sincere conception of the dramatic art, distinguished from its false companions by its directness, its simplicity of method and apparel, its appeal to the affections of men, its clear realization of the evils or the follies of their society. And this work of genuine art survives, even when its meaning, like the meaning of the Bible, is obscured by much repetition. Such a work is *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, which was played at too rare intervals in London by M. Coquelin *aîné* and his company. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, being a satire on Snobbery, probes the specially English foible, the central vice of character and deportment which paralyses the English hand and atrophies the English brain and heart. It might conceivably be said that France, with her Revolution and her levellers, had made Molière's masterpiece obsolete. Had the pranks of M. Jourdain nothing to say to us? as a critic declared at the time of the performance — with our Court, our Dorantes and Dorimènes, our very House of 'Mamamouchis' gloriously flourishing through the centuries, and still securely enthroned in the centre of our Imperial Democracy. Let us at least confess our kinship with M. Jourdain while he drives in troops through Bond Street, occupies whole streets and squares in the neighbourhood of Hyde Park, stores them with acres of pictures and tons of furniture, sups with Dorimène at the Carlton, begs for a baronetcy at Westminster, and makes the 'troisième révérence' at Buckingham Palace, and so long as we keep a public school system for the express benefit of Jourdain *fils*, and discipline his little mind in the principles of the famous lesson in orthography and the polite arts.

It is not necessary, therefore, to regard the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* as out of date nor out of harmony with the most cherished forms of our civilization. Molière, indeed, most inveterate of preachers and lecturers, chose, as all great artists choose, themes that are permanent, that belong to the web and woof

of human nature, not merely to social artifice. He had also a gift of gentleness, rare in the satirist, and it is this special quality which M. Coquelin delightfully illustrated. M. Jourdain was not the Snob Particular so much as the idealized, the universal, Snob. There was nothing vulgar about him; he was engaged in an act of ritual, culminating in the Beatific Vision of himself as a Mamamouchi, who has at the same time been mercifully delivered from the haunting spectre of a draper-father. This exquisite process was reflected in every tone of M. Coquelin's voice and every line of the wonderful comic mask that he put on. The whole man was absorbed in such revelations as of the true nature of prose. His lips were parted, his cheeks deep-lined with care or puckered with desperate earnestness. Now and then M. Coquelin, rogue that he is, must turn his solemn face, rapt in the great business of ceasing to be a man and becoming a gentleman, and show it to his audience, so that they might see the joy that transfigured it. But that was not often. M. Coquelin's art was too refined to be prodigal of such devices. The play, full of agreeably bustling action as it is, had its centre in the progress of M. Jourdain through the enchanted domain of Snobbery. The more extravagant his follies, the more contained was the actor's expression of them. At the critical passage of the immortal lesson Coquelin's voice hardly rose above a whisper, and it was with a certain dignified tolerance that he pushed aside Madame Jourdain's suggestion that it was more important to talk sense than to know what name the learned give to the faculty of speech. In the Mamamouchi scene, with its burlesque of ceremony, he was as a man entranced. The unreality of the Snob's existence penetrated him. The absurd had become to him as natural as Nicole's shriek of laughter at his 'gentlemanly' appearance seemed unnatural. He was the pure, the sublimated Snob, disinterested in his worship, and even ennobled by it. And in this he resembled us. Napoleon revived Snobbery as a mere instrument of government. We retain it for the joy of it, for the 'thing in itself'.

In such representations, therefore, appears at once the whole purpose of dramatic art, and it is only a sign of the decline of our own drama that we who, as a nation, live most by trade,

and are at the same time most ashamed of it, can produce no satiric reflection of this great national fault, and cannot even perceive the relevance of an immortal representation of it, designed, as it was, for other times and other manners. Contrast, indeed, the whole apparatus of such a play with the garb assumed by our own feeble and prostituted art – the simplicity and clearness of the action and dialogue, the absence of all elaboration in the scenery, the due subordination of each actor, even the greatest, to the lines and tones of the general dramatic picture. And examine the wealth of M. Coquelin's *répertoire*, as compared with the poverty of resource displayed by our leading artists. We have Shakespearean players in abundance. But who among our actors of the first rank plays Shakespeare, *and* Goldsmith, *and* Sheridan, *and* (let us say) Congreve at his best, *and* aims at exhibiting the general riches of our store of dramatic literature, as M. Coquelin exhibits the wealth of the French theatre? Such a range and choice of effort will never come under our present managerial system; we must look to the coming National Theatre to ensure it.

From the 'Nation' of June 27, 1908.

NOTE

It is interesting to observe the change of tone between the pieces in the Public Men and the Dramatic Sections. The fire, the *sæva indignatio* and sometimes the bitterness of many of the dramatic criticisms are in marked contrast with what one might almost call the urbanity of the political portraits. The nervous force is the same in both, but the angle of vision has altered. The criticism might be made that H. W. M.'s approach to the drama was more moral than artistic, just as his attitude to the stage of human reality was often more artistic than moral. One could indeed name certain plays, free of the charges he brings against the frivolity and futility of the contemporary drama, which do not fit in with his imperious categories. Certainly there was a didactic element in his ideas of what drama should be. In his article, 'Why we want a National Theatre' (1913), which I have rejected because it tends a little to over-emphasize the relation of drama to social forces, he argues that 'poetry is less useful to the State than Truth', that

a National Theatre might 'achieve for the British drama the inestimable boon of freeing it from the rule of commerce', that there are only two kinds of drama, 'that which is serious and critical of our times, and that which is a monstrous image of its worst features, a coarse, raging appeal to sensuality and commonness of soul', and, lastly, that the proper office of the dramatist is to act as the physician and the prophet of the nation 'as a living body and soul'. That the indictment he brings against the modern stage is as true as it is finely expressed, only critics of an idle mind (among whom the æsthete is numbered) can deny. But in his reaction against the stage as a modiste's and confectioner's shop-window, I think he leans too far towards the opposite extreme. The drama surely exists to express the soul of man by the interplay of human personality and emotion, and that soul has other means of self-realization beside those of the prophet's robe and the surgeon's rubber gloves.

Fortunately, H. W. M. is not infrequently a heretic in his own church, as the opening of the first paragraph in the next piece witnesses.

Let me take this opportunity of putting on record his efforts to assist Mr. Norman McDermott with the 'Everyman' Theatre at Hampstead. There are constant references to his 'splendid scheme for a popular theatre' in the letters, and now that that scheme has been materialized with such success, it is pleasant to think that my father saw its possibilities at once and did his best to further them.—H.J.M.

MR. CHESTERTON'S BLACK MAGIC[1]

WHAT is the true 'magic' of the theatre? Does it not reside in the power of the dramatist to excite to the uttermost the deepest feelings of his audience, to stimulate their sense of the sadness, or the fineness, or the coarseness, or the irony, of life? And is it not equally clear that for this purpose he is permitted and accustomed to use either 'natural' or 'super-natural' machinery, or to combine these forces, under the feeling that man is half a victim, half a contriver, of Fate? Thus he may shew Œdipus smitten by the Powers above (or below), and make him the innocent accomplice of his own shame; or Macbeth, lured by the powers of Hell along the path where ambition drives. But essentially there must be some profound human element in all these situations. You must feel that Hamlet's finely balanced nature is the kind of stuff to be set on fire, even though it be a flickering fire, by a ghostly reminder that life is for doing as well as for dreaming; and that Don Giovanni needs to be taught that he must not carry spiritual pride too far, or Brand the pride of goodness. Heaven and Hell, therefore, playing their part in the drama of human experience, must be a spiritual Heaven and Hell.

'Heaven but the vision of fulfilled desire,
And Hell the shadow of a soul on fire.'

In this fashion the spirituality of things asserts itself in the most material age, through its accustomed vehicles of poetry and literature, passing, like the legend of Faust, from one hand to another, and losing some touch of coarseness or childishness in the process. But what one cannot stomach in this age is the sham spirituality, in other words, the 'magic' which is the theme of Mr. Chesterton's new drama. Let me illustrate what I mean by my own acquaintance with a great believer in the play of super-naturalism in this life – I mean Mr. Stead. Stead was a man of the most natural 'magic' in the world. He threw out ideas as boys throw balls at cocoanuts at a fair, now and then hitting the mark, and now going ludicrously wide of it. But always he suggested the presence and incessant working of an

[1] *Magic*. By G. K. Chesterton.

ill-trained but vivid and powerfully suggestive imagination. Only when he resorted to his 'spooks' and his 'crystals' did he become a bore of the first water, and I presume that it was his sense of my own affrighted and afflicted look when this hateful topic was turned on that spared me its grossest excesses. But what is Mr. Chesterton doing with this game of parlour magic? He is a critic not only of exquisite temper, but of the most delicate aversions, attractions, intuitions, well fitted to make the world examine its new-found treasures, and test and weigh them, lest perchance, they should turn out to be dross. Therefore, it would be a calamity to find him among the mere wonder-workers, or wonder-believers, the stuff in which all the Sludges of all the ages find their account, and from which they finally rub off that fineness of sensibility which is the true gift of genius.

It is for that reason that I quarrel with his play *Magic*, and with his stranger, the sham magician. In the first place, he is not magical and not strange. *Item*, he is an ordinary sentimental lover. *Item*, it is of no consequence to anybody whether or when he is Mr. Maskelyne, and whether or when he is a genuine wizard of Endor, making pictures tremble on the walls and chairs tilt on their legs, and turning red lamps into blue. *Item*, the work of the true magician is not to frighten people out of their wits, but out of their folly and wickedness. *Item*, the incidental introduction of the Devil is of equal insignificance, for he has nothing to do in or with the ridiculously neutral company on which he intrudes. Going about, as he does, like a roaring lion, seeking what statesmen, saints, priests, pimps, thieves, and hypocrites he may devour, Mr. Chesterton wastes his time and ours by introducing him where he is neither wanted nor unwanted. Now, a man of Mr. Chesterton's force of mind has no business to waste anything, even the Devil. Engage his Satanic Majesty in the tempting of woman to tempt man, as the Bible does, or the re-conquest of Heaven by the ruin of Earth, as Milton does, or reveal him, lurking deep, silent, and unsuspected in man's heart, as Burns does; but don't degrade him into a nervous shiver for old women massed round a table, or curates simpering in a ducal drawing-room. For the objection to this conjuring business

is Mr. Walkley's, that Mr. Chesterton does not show his magician actually getting the rabbits out of the hat. There is, no doubt, an immense verbal parade of spiritual rabbits inside the hat. But in the moment of exodus you have a vision, not of rabbits, but of a muddled assortment of lining and felt, and of the conjurer's clumsy hands and obtrusively obvious shirt and sleeve-links.

Let me therefore suggest the reason why Mr. Chesterton's philosophy and Mr. Chesterton's play are both at fault. The trouble is that he deals with visible instead of invisible hats. Now, our so-called sceptical playwrights – Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, and Galsworthy – have a profound consciousness of being surrounded by a cloud of *invisible* witnesses, applauding or condemning, not the paper beliefs, but the concrete deeds, of their times. It is the sense of this encompassing host, of their embarrassing interventions and suggestions, which makes the drama that this generation is best fitted to hear and see. They describe an earthly city, or a sub-earthly one (is not Hell much like London?), while they desire a heavenly. Men's sins and their consequences, men's ignorance and its consequences, men's errors and their consequences, the true spiritual habit of those who attire themselves in this or that masquerade of character, my true relationship to my brother or sister, and his or hers to me – here is the ground of eternal mystery in which the average intellect gropes, and the superior mind sees clearly, while the dramatic genius lights it all up with serene fire from heaven or lurid flashes from hell. Here, if you please, is White Magic, created to confound the old common Black Magic of invocation and exorcism. And the proof of where the greater potency lies is that Ibsen's *Master Builder*, or Hauptmann's *Weavers*, answers the Christian test of suitability to the age, while Mr. Chesterton's *Magic* seems chiefly calculated to enshroud men's minds in the mists they and time have put behind them.

And really Mr. Chesterton has himself to blame for his failure. His vicars, and conjurers, and fairy-tale tellers, and his terrible young *pétroleur* from the States, are the merest fudge. But his Duke is a gem, as good in its way as those immortal muddlers, Mrs. Nickleby, or Mr. Brooke of *Middle-*

march. For with the Duke Mr. Chesterton comes back to the dramatist's true business, which is the illumination of life for the guidance of men, not of hollow turnips for the scaring of yokels. The proof of this is that the Duke is actable as well as laughable; whereas the necromancer and his foils, being mere stage properties, can only be stiffly posed and laboriously counterfeited. Mr. Chesterton must really cheer up. I will tell him a secret, which I had from an incidental angel in Fleet Street. The Middle Ages do not merely seem to be over; they *are* over.

From the 'Nation' of November 15, 1913.

NOTE

I consider this the most direct, subtle and triumphant piece of dramatic criticism H. W. M. ever wrote.—H.J.M.

Not since my remembrance of Salvini do I recall quite so imposing a suggestion of physical force trained to produce the highest effects of art as was conveyed by Chaliapine in *Boris Godounov*. Chaliapine's force is singularly restrained; indeed, if it were used up to the full measure of his power it would be insupportable. He cannot be less than six feet four in height; he is of massive and imposing build; his serious face, with its fine eyes, is admirably suited to the expression of tragic emotion. What an Ajax he would make! What a Macbeth! And yet, how conspicuous and grateful a relief from our own school of tragedians, who seek to represent mental suffering by the most elaborate physical signs (Irving by the fearful contortions of the Trial Scene of *The Bells*, Tree by the perpetual face-play of his *Othello*, or, to take a French example, Bernhardt with her recurring nerve-storms and ecstasies)! Chaliapine, with greater natural gifts than any of these artists, and with a voice of wonderful range and unfailing purity of tone, gives the impression of playing and singing beneath himself, of having at his command unused resources, proceeding from the depth and power of his personality and the richness of his artistic endowment.

But it is this self-command which, though some may take it as an example of Diderot's theory of the 'insensibility' of the actor, is really the evidence of the economy of his gifts, as well as of the depth and truth of his conception. His *Boris Godounov*, like *Macbeth*, was a study of remorse, less subtle than Shakespeare's, but finer and simpler, as Moussorgsky's music is simpler than Wagner's. It is difficult to discover a moral element in Macbeth's conduct after the murder. He is a moral being *before*, but his crime turns him into a hunted man, concerned only to cover up his track and to secure his booty. It is his imagination that will not sleep, and horribly peoples with phantoms the air and the very seats of his palace feast. Moussorgsky's Boris is a higher type of criminal, and his trouble reveals the sinner's real tragedy. Remorse is his absorbing passion. He desires not safety from man, but forgiveness from God. But how? He has murdered; and he has the fruits of

murder; his excuse was that it was an act of State. His kingdom he still desires for himself and for his people, and he would hand it down to his son. But he is none the less a possessed man. 'I see the child, and from his throat drips blood', he cries, and it is the horror of pity, not of fear, that fills him. 'I suffer! I suffer!' is his refrain. 'My crime will not leave me. Everything brings it back to me. I must die so as to escape its besetting.' Death, indeed, comes to him in the moment of the full revelation that Demetrius, who threatens his throne, is an impostor, and that his victim, the young Tsarevitch, was so thoroughly dead that he had become a saint and a miracle-worker. Macbeth must have rejoiced to realize that his bloody prize was safe, and that not only Duncan slept well, but all Banquo's kin. No such cruel relief is the lot of the more refined Boris; no such suggestion is for a moment conveyed to the audience in the subdued and reticent commentary of Moussorgsky's music.

Chaliapine, therefore, has to represent a character essentially noble, whose parental tenderness is not veiled, as in Lady Macbeth, in a monstrous lust, but shines the more conspicuously against the dark background of his evil deed. How does he figure the piety, the sorrow, of Boris? Chiefly by one gesture, remarkable for its truthfulness. As deep misery seems to contract the heart, so its expression contracts the features, and Chaliapine's face is drawn and wrinkled into a fixed expression of anguish. To this his wonderful voice responds in a deep, low, thrilling intonation, which, I imagine, could be perfectly heard in the remotest corner of the great theatre. There is no monotony in this study of sorrow; for as the play advances its expression becomes more acute, and you see Boris paling and ageing before your eyes. Even his colour seems to return as he forces back the emotion which distracts his soul, and becomes a Tsar and a statesman again. Neither is the actor's powerful personality obtruded with the remorseless insistence of our actor-managers, nor allowed to obscure the natural development of the drama or the share which the other artists take in it. When one of our stage luminaries embraces a mere twinkling point of dramatic stardust he envelopes and annihilates him. Observe the way in which Chaliapine gives full

play to each minor artist with whom he is concerned. How remote is this refinement from the egotism which with us poisons the actor's art!

Chaliapine is said to desire to relinquish musical drama, and to devote himself purely to the cultivation of dramatic speech. And there indeed would be an experiment of the utmost interest to the audiences whom his genius has taken by storm. Great statuesque and emotional acting is, indeed, possible to the singer who is something more than a musical rhetorician, as anyone familiar with Van Rooy's playing of 'Wotan' in *Siegfried* can realize. But even Wagner's deeply lined and impressive, and often gloriously poetic annotation of the *Ring* wearies you at moments, because it fixes the play of emotion, stiffens the artist, deprives him of the free use of his face, hands, body, and, while adding a new, delightful, but distracting appeal, withholds the full effects of eloquent speech, eloquent gesture, and still more eloquent silence. Moussorgsky's music seems just to have caught the beautiful purity and depth that sound through the first bars of the overture to *Lohengrin*, and introduced the last generation of Englishmen, sated with the Italian school, to a new world of musical art. But, with all its delicacy of suggestion, it lacks Wagner's force and intellectuality, and the libretto is less adequate still. So that Chaliapine has to be his own interpreter, and to clothe his Boris with the full humanity that these fresh, charming creations of the Russian composers do not quite confer. One would like, therefore, to think of him as a Shakespearean actor, to imagine, for example, what this tremendous man would do in the scene in *Othello* when Salvini rises and for a moment simply *looks* at Iago, much as Chaliapine as the horsed Ivan looks down at the cowering crowd at his feet. And if that moment comes, may I be there to see!

From the 'Nation' of July 26, 1913.

NOTE

The eagerness at full flood of this piece (very plainly written before the war) so happily wedded with flexibility of style, brings out two aspects of personality. One is that though the writer went on from unwasted force to full maturity of expression, he

never, once his mind was formed, ever really got a day older. He burnt the fuel up more fiercely than most men and yet (or, should we say, therefore) there were never any ashes. He never *looked* an hour older than forty and he never *was* an hour older than thirty, and a thirty in full blaze at that. Yet he had a Jaquez temper, and he felt the War so bitterly, because it made him, not older, but sadder. He was a melancholy and a lively man all at once and so at times (but only by halves and nothing long) a cynical one. But with all his melancholy and loneliness too, I doubt if he ever sought or needed human intimacies. From them, ever since my mother died, he was almost consistently aloof, and his relations with all other human beings were those of light rather than warmth. He very often was an extremely jovial companion, and an outrageous jest could throw him into paroxysms. But take advantage of that, turn the handle of the door into the sanctum, and you found it locked. The man whose natural qualities attracted human love in a way that is the lot only of the few, was the very man who could do without it, *totus teres, atque rotundus*, as fewer still can do. And that made his passage through life with the burning fire never flickering or dimming in his breast the more remarkable.

I will quote here some passages from the private letters which throw a revealing though only a momentary light upon his loneliness and his attitude to people with whom he came in contact.

'*Loyalties*. I'm a bad witness on them, for I'm crazy about ideas, and would betray my grandmother for them. But in these days, it is increasingly difficult to keep up one's feeling for people whom one suddenly finds to be completely severed in thought and feeling – oceans rolling between. I always cut the tie then, not because I want to but because I can't help it. That is partisanship, I'm afraid. But these things seem decided for you.'

'I die daily in this filthy world, without living the life of righteousness, being in the gall and bond of hate of such a society as one is fated to drag one's holiest thoughts and feelings through. Sometimes a note of joy, and then everything trembling into silence as before. But then I think I like loneliness – do you?'

And in another letter: 'I am in a state of absolute loneliness – and yet not quite unhappy. Do you know it?'

It is a pity he did not write more about music, which he passionately loved and refers to constantly in the letters. In music he was a symbolist and peopled its country with half-earthly images, dim figures as trees walking among which he was more at home than in a world of (to him) a lesser reality.

I quote one of these passages: 'I don't think there's anything quite like it (Beethoven's Fifth Symphony) – the way that a cloud of imaginative beings are built (in the second movement) over the primeval nothingness, and then, out of the melancholy chaos of the soul and the world, a magnificent triumphant purpose emerges. I don't know whether things are like that – but the music seems to say that they are.'—H.J.M.

THE MASTER BUILDER[1]

POETRY and Truth out of one's life – that is one of the classical definitions of the content and object of literature. Truth, because it concerns the discoveries of the intellect; Poetry, as it concerns the intimations of the soul. Both these materials are to be found, if anywhere in dramatic writing, in Ibsen's *Master Builder*; and it is, therefore, especially interesting for those of us who read this play many years ago, or saw it produced while Mr. Archer's great work of introduction was still fresh to the theatre-going public, to observe how the mere passage of time, and the gatherings of experience, have eased its representation, and clarified its meaning and intention. Much that was then merely cloudy or disturbing seems to have fallen into its proper place, as the new survey of life has become more panoramic. For *The Master Builder* is undoubtedly a play for the middle-aged, rather than for the young. The young can, indeed, understand Hilda, but not Solness; we – or those of us whose imagination has been kept tolerably green – can understand both. We have knocked at the door, and our own door has been duly battered in. We and our age have passed through the Solness stages of pious idealization, pursuit of material happiness, construction of 'homes for human beings', to the point where they have led us back to a modified, or even, it may be, a destructive idealism. Most of us have felt that if we could not go on building or worshipping in the old churches, we could never be content till we had contributed a brick or two to the new. Mr. Shaw and the realists—no longer, like Hilda, with the morning's dew on their furrowed cheeks – have perpetrated their sceptical intrusion on the elder beliefs, and have prepared the way for the coming death-grapple with the younger ones. And, in one way or another, the symbolic or semi-symbolic picture of the poet's own dramatic development has wrought itself, as all literature is wrought, into the thought of his times and of the times that have succeeded his. . . .

It is idle to pass the criticism that *The Master Builder* is not

[1] *The Master Builder*, by Ibsen, produced at the Little Theatre by Mr. Granville Barker.

a good acting play. Certainly, it is not a marvel of constructive skill. But the mechanics of *The Master Builder* are not its main interest. Ibsen himself has often surpassed them. Nor does its spell hang upon its purely literary quality – the ringing, yet always mysterious, charm of its phrase, and the growing excitement of the catastrophe. What is so extraordinary in *The Master Builder* is the rarity of its spiritual atmosphere, the sense that the spectator gets of a close and thrilling representation both of the bolder and clearer and the more intricate movements of a man's soul. There is nothing so very puzzling or mystical in the outer development of its ideas; little that Ibsen had not already said in *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* and the realistic dramas. Youth's boldness, and joyous faith and simplicity – the cautious grasping timidity of middle-age, playing always for safety, harping on sentimental griefs but callous to real need, busied in 'duties' which veil the heart's petrifaction, dandling its ideals till they die in its arms, or dwindle to 'sick consciences', or change from living, beautiful children to wax dolls – and then, again, the rough challenge of the new facts, scattering compromise to the winds, and demanding All or Nothing – these are inevitable processes of human experience. Every wayfarer recognizes these milestones on the road. Every fighter knows these marks of battle and death. The attraction of *The Master Builder* lies rather in the way in which these vital forces are made to clash and hurtle so that the actual passages and scenery of the drama fade by slow gradations away, and the stage is filled with shadow-figures projected on the screen of your own life-history. What to you is this crafty, middle-aged builder, who has lost his nerve and used up his stock of ideas? Well, he *is* you and the next man in the stalls. What this wild slip of a girl, pressing Solness on to mad tasks that he feels he cannot accomplish? That is the energy that remains, the work that God and Nature have yet assigned. Who were the 'helpers and servers', were they 'white' or 'black', and did they come from without or from within? That riddle we may never quite solve. Those harps in the air – what far-off music was that? The notes you heard when a boy, and forgot when you came to be a man.

It is clear, therefore, that this haunting kind of spiritual drama – speaking of

'Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute' –

must be played with great delicacy and skill. It has been suggested that Miss McCarthy's Hilda was not 'seductive' enough and Mr. McKinnel's Solness not mystical enough in Mr. Granville Barker's superb representation of the play. Well, the East Wind is not precisely 'seductive', though there is a pleasure in facing it. And the snapping of old ties, the breach with old habits, the burying of old idols – the harsh, abrupt summons to judgment and righteousness – possess no specially endearing and soothing element for mankind. Hilda Wangel has not come to coddle Solness, or even merely to ensnare him into a new and real love-venture; she has come to make him live, to fill his frozen limbs with the torture of fresh circulation. She has come to tear him from his day-dreams, to save him if he can be saved.

All this wants to be sharply indicated; the player must be full of the withering cruelty of youth, of the recklessness and contemptuous impatience even of its love for anything more experienced and less brave than itself. Representing all these things, and working the delicate machinery of the play up to the right point of intensity, but no further, Miss McCarthy seemed to me to achieve a remarkable success. There are always passages in Ibsen where an English playgoer is tempted to laugh; partly, perhaps, because he is so little used to the effect of poetry on the stage, and partly because Ibsen's flight in the upper air is liable to sudden dangerous dips, like an aeroplane's, into the mid-region of the tragic-absurd. The one or two points at which one looked for such an interruption on Tuesday night passed with barely a titter; and Miss McCarthy's final guidance of the play up the emotional steeps of the last Act to its ecstatic close was equally sure and powerful.

Mr. McKinnel's Solness was a study of quite a different type. A number of critics thought it stolid and unimaginative. There were moments when, losing sight of his conception of the character, I was tempted to think so too. But not for long.

Mr. McKinnel is the most individual actor on our stage since Irving; but his personality happens to be sharply distinguished from his predecessor's. Irving had, if anything, too much expressiveness; every muscle and feature and limb were on fire with the desire to express, and the exact intellect worked them all at high pressure. Mr. McKinnel has no such sensitive nervous apparatus. His temperament and physique incline him to broad, calm effects. His Solness did not physically suggest either a 'sick' man or a listener to such stange music as beset the ears of *The Master Builder*, when he hung the wreath round the vane. But no one could have better figured forth the *trouble* of Solness – the dim confusion of his middle-age as contrasted with the bright vision of his youth. There the actor put his finger on the central thought of the dramatist, and rendered it with great subtlety. From that right conception the power of the whole representation developed itself with unforced and surprising effects through the whole dramatic picture of a man blundering on to his doom.

From the 'Nation' of April 1, 1911.

MR. SHAW'S MORALITY PLAY

Some years ago Mr. Bernard Shaw wrote for the English stage what he called 'A Sermon in Crude Melodrama'. It was in effect a parable of Christian doctrine, affirming the existence of God, His intervention in men's affairs, conversion, salvation by works and by faith, and other teachings then and now officially commended to the people as a matter of divine revelation. The Lord Chamberlain being unfamiliar with these doctrines, or incompetent to follow their playful application to the mental habits of cowboys, and the Defender of the Faith being unable to enlighten him on the subject, certain passages in the play in which its meaning was clearly conveyed were declared to be blasphemous, and on that ground the work was refused a licence. The play, as I have said, was a paraphrase of the Gospels, being in that respect an isolated phenomenon in the serried mass of sex-plays surrounding it. To make this quite plain, Mr. Shaw, having in his mind narratives like the conversion of S. Paul, or life-fables like the confrontation of the Pharisee and the Publican, introduced obvious adaptations of them into his story. But the Censor would not have it. He may indeed have thought, as a State authority, that it would never do to transplant these truths from the Church, where nobody paid the slightest attention to them, to the stage, where they might, by their strangeness, attain at least a success of curiosity. In any case, the self-satisfied Pharisees of 1909 would not have paid much heed to Mr. Shaw's morality play. It may be that the practical atheists and convicted sinners of 1921, standing on the brink of the ruin of their society, may find something in *The Shewing up of Blanco Posnet* to suit them.

The way, therefore, having been cleared for the preacher, *The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet* was at last produced at the Repertory Theatre. It played magnificently. Mr. Shaw calls it a melodrama, and so it is in the sense that its types are conventional (they are taken, for Mr. Shaw's convenience, from Bret Harte), and that its spiritual meaning, which is perfectly clear and simple, is given a rather violent outward expression. Nevertheless, it is all about God, talked of familiarly, as the

authors of *Job* and *Everyman*, and a great number of Saints in the agony of their souls, are accustomed to talk of Him, and also in the language that cowboys, when induced to consider the subject, are likely to use. And the remarkable thing about the Hampstead audience was that while the light laughter that our modern theatre courts should have abounded if the Lord Chamberlain's view of the play had been the correct one, there was not a line in *Blanco Posnet* which, as far as I could judge, seemed to provoke it. The audience had been well amused with two rather slight confections of Mr. Shaw's genius. But *Blanco Posnet* sent it back to the mood in which people will always listen to truth about life, even if they are indisposed to accept its sacraments. What is this but the ancient and normal purpose of dramatic art? Our bedecked and upholstered playhouses are fair enough places for embroidering the fancies of men, of ministering to their lusts. But should theatres like the 'Old Vic' or the Repertory end by putting this kind of drama out of fashion and making room for another, plays like *Blanco Posnet* strike one as being exactly the kind of food on which a new and reformed taste in dramatic literature will more and more be fed. The soul of man and its plight in such a world as this; the unseen but not unfelt Power, with which it stands at such unaccountable odds; this mass of common, impulsive humanity, driven by habit whither it knows not – who is going to handle these relationships of sense and spirit so that their existence can be realized and apprehended? If this is to be done, and something therefore accomplished for the salvation of man, the drama would seem to be the art *par excellence* for doing it. Time was when the Church thought so too. Religion readily seized upon the vivid, emotional stuff of the Stage as the natural food of its youth; and abandoned it to a lower range of feelings only when a palsy began to creep over its own limbs.

Now *Blanco Posnet* is exactly the kind of play that what I may call the lively seriousness of the age demands. It is full of rough, primitive colour; its stage is noisy, and picturesquely crowded, and it treats of a form of human experience to which we, on the whole, would seem to have reverted. Has not our civilization grown to be as lawless as a miners' camp? Has it

much idea of justice beyond that of the revolver and the rope? Are not the worst men at the top? And are not the best of the others rather dubious Blanco Posnets? Well, Blanco is pulled up in his wild career by just the kind of intervention that now and then has seemed – perhaps only seemed – to come between dead or depraved societies and the living spirit of humanity.

From the 'Nation' of March 19, 1921.

NOTE

It may seem a bit queer that I have included the criticism of *Blanco Posnet*, and rejected that on *Saint Joan*. The reason is that both plays are variations upon the same theme, and that the lesser play has the richer interpretation and the greater the poorer. The criticism of *Saint Joan* is not H. W. M. at his best. Here, one might have said: 'You have got what you want out of the contemporary drama: now go in and win'. But the treatment is a trifle finiken, uncertain in handling and over-critical in detail – a half-way house between Mr. Cunninghame Graham's scorn of an old Miracle Play in a new and shining dress, and Mr. Middleton Murry's enthusiasm for it, even if he did go all wrong over the Epilogue. And half-way houses did not suit H. W. M.; they were not in his line. The sure aim with which he goes to the heart of *Blanco Posnet* is a different thing altogether.

Odd, by the way, he should have written: 'Has not our civilization grown to be as lawless as a miners' camp?' That is what all civilizations were in their origin, quite literally, miners' camps, and that is what they are to-day, only more so. The things for which we value civilization were incidental exfoliations.

In the beginning, the miners did not seek wealth for wealth's sake; they sought it for the gift of life. Until we go back to that ancient conception and rarefy and broaden and charge it with our modern ideas, until the incidentals become the key of the symphony, one may pause to ask whether these miners' camps have been worth the dust they have raised.—H.J.M.

MR. SHAW'S CÆSAR[1]

It is a characteristic fault of our criticism that it usually omits to consider what a writer is driving at, and why he chooses this theme or that, or applies to it one kind of treatment or another. Take the case of Mr. Shaw. There are certain notions about him which have become fixed in the public mind. He is, first of all, a wit – or rather a 'droll'. 'Max' depicts him in the Leicester Galleries standing on his head, and suggests that he has stood there since Mr. Beerbohm was last in England. This gift of Mr. Shaw's is held to be at the disposal of the British people for its unlimited amusement; and that crucial point having been settled, its quality, intent, and the habits of thought and expression which it illustrates or veils, are considered to be of no importance whatever. And yet, though, like all wits, Mr. Shaw can be irresponsible, and like a punster, insist on joking because he sees an opening for a joke, he is full of 'intention'. So much so that Mr. Shaw, the moralist, is only too apt to arrest Mr. Shaw, the artist, and taking him before Mr. Be-good-and-let-who-will-be-clever, to have him bound over to be of good behaviour. In other words, he is a serious critic of his times. And among such a critic's liberties is that of treating life as a whole, and satirizing that which he knows and sees by an imaginative presentment of other times and scenes. Shakespeare, Swift, Molière, who has not done this? But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Shaw is accused of doing it in a play which reveals much the most careful objective study of history that he has ever made. His Cæsar, said Mr. Walkley at the time of the play's performance, is a mere 'sprout' of Mr. Shaw's mind. 'He takes a gentleman of fifty-four, and calls him (for fun) Julius Cæsar, and a girl of sixteen, whom he dubs Cleopatra, brings them together, and sets them talking as two people of their age, sex, and condition, would naturally talk to-day.' And this, exclaimed Mr. Walkley ironically, is 'history'!

Now the dramatic critic of the *Times* is, of course, a scholar, and presumably knows that Cæsar at the age of fifty-four, and

[1] *Cæsar and Cleopatra*. By George Bernard Shaw. Produced by Mr. Forbes Robertson at Drury Lane Theatre.

Cleopatra at the age of sixteen, were brought together in Alexandria, at the time and under the circumstances which Mr. Shaw describes. But what he did not seem to realize was that Mr. Shaw's study of Cæsar is modelled with almost a copyist's exactitude on Mommsen, and that the whole of this fascinating episode of the siege of Alexandria, and of the campaign which relieved it, may be seen, with Mommsen's following picture of the soldier-statesman, in his famous fifth book. Indeed, there is so much detail, so much history, that the action of the drama is impeded so as to get it all in. Cæsar's clemency, the rapid movements of his soldier's mind, and the still quicker instincts of his statesmanship, his temperance in eating and drinking, his elegance of dress, even his small personal vanities (such as the wearing of a wreath to hide his baldness) – all these habits of mind and body, and the cold, unrevengeful temper and realistic character which governed them – appear in Mr. Shaw's workmanship. But why did the theme attract him? Obviously, I think, because of Mommsen's description of Cæsar as standing aloof 'from all ideology and everything fanciful'. Here, therefore, was a conqueror after Mr. Shaw's heart. Humane, but no idealist. A reconstructor of society, without prejudice. An artist and an ascetic, or next-door to one. Playing with worlds and states as on a chess-board, but all for utility. In a word, a true Fabian hero. Mr. Shaw takes this idealized but historic and brilliantly plausible sketch of a great man, and rearranges it with much literalness, and under the limitations of time and place that this theme imposed on him. His play is an essay in dramatic history – good or bad – and possibly made unseemly in British eyes by the presence of jokes. These jokes are no more and no less anachronistic than Shakespeare's study of Elizabethan politics in *Troilus and Cressida*. But the history is there all the same.

My own criticism of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* would be that imagination plays not too great but too small a part in it. There are certain sides of humanity which simply do not appeal to Mr. Shaw. Passion is one of them. Talk of love, and he refers you to the police court. So when he brings Cleopatra on to the stage, he introduces you to Cleopatra the Cat, not

Cleopatra the Sorceress, and Cæsar makes a humdrum descent from the Lover, or Imperial Flirt, to the Pedagogue. Thus the mind all the while travels away from Mr. Shaw's picture of a cruel, pettish, cowardly schoolgirl and her cold, smiling, wise tutor, to the dazzling figures of Shakespeare's tragedy. For while there is a terrible death-close association between Cæsar and Cleopatra, the eternal image of thousands of such alliances since the world began, there is no such inevitable, and therefore interesting, tie between this child, whom Cæsar is trying to make a queen, and the conqueror of a world then approaching the last dizzy steps of his throne. It is all possible; the story of Cæsar's love affair with the young queen is perhaps unhistorical. But it is not dramatic, it is even a little ludicrous, and Mr. Shaw's nimble, glancing, restless wit has to be constantly at work to prevent the audience from laughing at it. And the reason of this partial failure is that Mr. Shaw is more of an intellectual than a dramatist. His interest is rather in Cæsar's ideas, which he often interprets (and but slightly modernizes) with singular nobility of thought and expression, than in his soul. We miss, therefore, the intent, absorbed gaze of the artist on his work, the rich stores of sympathetic or indignant fancy which Shakespeare lavished on the favourite creatures of his genius. Mr. Shaw wants to show – and does show – how charmingly, how reasonably, the affairs of the world may be conducted; what vain things are passion, revenge, or a narrow, pedantic idealism. This task he executes with great skill, and now and then, as in Cæsar's outburst over the death of Pothinus, with fine sincerity. But a good deal is word-play, jests – such as the highly agreeable fooling with Britannus – that carry off the philosophy of the play without springing inevitably from it. For instance, nothing much happens. Cæsar comes to Alexandria, and Cæsar goes. But while you feel the presence of a character full of grace and charm, and an intellect full of resource, the impression is much slighter than is left by Shakespeare's mere sketch of the great Imperator. Mr. Shaw's Cæsar is a more reasoned, a more intellectually refined, conception. But it is not quite the 'mighty Julius', any more than his little Egyptian cockatrice is Cleopatra.

From the 'Nation' of April 19, 1913.

JUSTICE[1] AND MR. GALSWORTHY

THE cycle of Galsworthy plays at the Court is a proper reminder that Mr. Galsworthy, like Thomas Hardy, is an epical writer, presenting his view of our times, not so much in detached studies as through the spectacle either of a family group or of a chain of social and moral characteristics. The first method he applies to fiction, the second to drama. Each requires an orderly mind, a wide and prudent observation, a close and powerful technique – above all, the gift of spiritual discernment. Few will deny these qualities to Mr. Galsworthy. Who writes better? Who can be more dignified, more classical in manner, or fashion his theme with a more skilful, more deliberate hand? Who feels more keenly, and, building a habitation for men, never fails to write over the portal – 'This is the house of the soul'.

And yet one's final reflection on Mr. Galsworthy is that he is a very reserved writer, and that even his passion and function of pity, the grand motive both of his character and of his literary life, is held in balance, and runs steadily and powerfully, but not to the heroic issue. Shelley's and Tolstoy's indignation at the cruelty, the want of understanding, of the modern State, has much the same root as his. But they go on to a complete renunciation of social values; their quarrel with the social order is to the death. Not so Mr. Galsworthy. He criticizes, he protests, but he also qualifies. The nearest approach to an overflow is *The Silver Box*, and yet that is the quietest play that Mr. Galsworthy has ever written. So with *Justice*. *Justice* is rather less human than *The Silver Box*; more typical of a social state, and less centred in a single figure of simple and profound significance. One feels that it ought to have been Mr. Galsworthy's greatest play. In subject it is. By no accidental choice the author of the most wonderful book ever written took justice for the exordium and the text of his work, knowing it to be man's final quest on earth and the touchstone of all his social failures. Most of the great moderns pursue Plato's theme; indeed, they never leave it for long. 'Surely,' says Gogol's Murazoff, 'we commit injustice at every step and are

[1] *Justice*. By John Galsworthy.

at every instant the cause of the misery of fellow-creatures, even when we have no evil intentions.' And if there was ever a temperamentally just man and writer, Mr. Galsworthy is he.

How, then, does it happen that *Justice*, an impressive, poignant, and deeply religious work, a play that every Judge on the Bench should see and tremble at, just falls short of a masterpiece? Maybe the action is a little too formal, the *mise-en-scène* too local and English. But fundamentally the trouble is that the powerful impulse of the play, while carrying its creator far, has not carried him quite far enough. One feels that the figure of the unbalanced Falder is too slight and too specialized to carry the weight of the theme. He is crushed; and his fate is a cruelty and a shame. But Falder's tragedy is a minor one; to the eye of average enlightenment, it may well seem that our monstrous law, our even more monstrous prison system, does greater evil than this. That is the reason why the play, fresh in its essential criticism, dates a little. Since it was written, science has written an emendation or two even on the criminal code. Falder, going as a sheep to the slaughter at the hands of a Judge and Jury of 1912, might have been given first offenders' law in 1922. The neurologists would certainly have voted him to be a case of psychic 'shell-shock', and it is within the bounds of faith to believe that a living Judge would so have charged the Jury.

Nevertheless, *Justice* remains a truthful and a noble play. And its indictment is far from commonplace. Mr. Galsworthy thinks about the State as the Christian and the revolutionary have always thought about it; that it has a carnal mind, at enmity not only with God but with human nature. And he knows, as all students know, the vanity of its criminal and penal procedure. Our prisons do not reform criminals, they make them; our Judges, who fill their dark recesses, never visit them, and their sentences are immoralities unpardonable in a functionary entrusted with the greatest of all moral offices. Impossible to have this concept more delicately suggested than in the trial and prison scenes of *Justice*. The employer who prosecutes Falder, the Judge who sentences him, the prison governor, the prison chaplain, the prison doctor, who torture and finally destroy his soul, are all conventionally good people;

when it is too late one of them even tries to blunder back into charity. They are hunters, enjoying the chase, or joining in it from a sense of duty to society. The quarry is a simple, amorous boy, with a kink. The kink, nurtured in prison, swells into a death-malady. There was no reason why it should; hundreds of boys are like Falder, only luckier, or with a trifle more self-restraint. Only, says Mr. Galsworthy, society would have it so. Well, society, especially judicial society, had better repair to the Court Theatre and there bethink themselves what they do when next they run a foolish boy to death, or to worse than death.

From the 'Nation' of February 18, 1922.

NOTE

I had a tough struggle in choosing between this and the criticism of Mr. Galsworthy's *The Fugitive*, written eleven years earlier. There is hardly a pin's weight between them, and, if I could, I would have had both. But the criticism on *Justice* is later, and the earlier work is rarely quite so good as the later; the first criticism gives a rather fuller description of Mr. Galsworthy's *mise-en-scène* than the second, while it has no such searching and electric sentence as – 'the State . . . has a carnal mind, at enmity not only with God but with human nature'. Another editor might perhaps have omitted both on the ground that neither reaches the intellectual pre-eminence of so much of his other work. But I am anxious to dispel the idea that my father's writings are little more than the dazzling sword-play of a hard fighter, a set of variations on the theme – 'I will not cease from mental strife'. There is a musing undersong in this piece which tells a different story.—H.J.M.

PART SIX: RELIGION

For like a child sent with a fluttering light
To feel his way along a gusty night
Man walks the world. Again and yet again
The lamp shall be by fits of passion slain.
But shall not He who sent him from the door
Relight the lamp once more – and yet once more.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A SAINT

EVERY now and again there arise in the world teachers who set aside the questions which men usually ask themselves or each other and are occupied solely with one problem – the meaning of life. Nothing else seems to them to be so important, and in the end, whether during their life or after it, society begins after its fashion to agree with them. These men do not belong purely to the type that we call philosophers. They not only observe life clearly, but they are so impressed with its seriousness that they find it impossible to govern their own existences on lines that are not in harmony with the truth that they have discovered about it. They can no longer share the average thoughts of their time. They must either change the main current of those thoughts or they must themselves withdraw from it. The stronger remain and aim at leading their fellows with them to the high table-land to which they themselves have painfully climbed. Among this latter type of human spirits few rarer or greater have appeared than Count Lyof Tolstoy. Nothing is more impressive about this remarkable man than the complete unity of his life and his intellectual work. 'He to whom the Eternal Word speaks,' says Thomas à Kempis, 'is set at liberty from a multitude of opinions.' Through the complexity of modern organization Count Tolstoy has followed a single clue which runs equally through his artistic and his philosophical writings. This man, whose power lies so especially in the emotional presentation of life, has for more than twenty years never written without a definite moral aim. And what he has preached he has practised. He has seen events in their conventionally dramatic aspects – in war, in society, in European capitals, and on the country estates of a rich nobleman – and he has come to prefer the lot of a peasant and to find his happiness in ministering to the needs of the hungry and helpless. Like Saint Francis, he has felt no shame and no repulsion in eating out of the same dish as the leper. But, unlike the mediæval saint, his outlook upon a world grown complex beyond the

imagination of simpler forms of society is singularly broad. He has surveyed the entire sphere of our modern activities, faith, philosophy, the theory and practice of art, and, above all, the social and political fabric. This double service of personal affection and consistent teaching stands at once for and against the world – for a conception of its true life and against its accepted interpretation of life. It is impossible not to listen to him, for he speaks with unexampled clearness and simplicity. And for many of us, too, it seems as if this man in the peasant's dress, who scatters his thoughts freely for those who want them, and preaches to a world governed by force the simple doctrine of persuasive reason, has in the main laid down or revived the lines on which must proceed the moral and intellectual battle of our day and of the days that are to come.

What is the secret of this attraction? First of all, it is, as I have said, that Tolstoy has lived the life, and that his work in fiction and criticism traces, step by step, the road of his own pilgrim's progress; and, secondly, that he associates himself with an eternally interesting topic. His Pierre, his Levin, his Nekhludoff, pass before our eyes chiefly that we may see through them the passage of Tolstoy's own soul, and of all human souls, from death to life. Or his Ivan Ilyitch, again, dies without reaching this capital event, or reaches it only when the last waves of mortal pain and fear are rolling over his head. Tolstoy himself has spoken repeatedly of his own experience – of how, at the height of his fame, and in the full enjoyment of physical health, he, in Dante's words and his own, felt himself to be lost in the 'selva oscura'. In finding the way out, he aims mainly at presenting to modern eyes the most vivid illustration he can give of the teaching of the New Testament. *The Death of Ivan Ilyitch* is the parable of the rich man who built greater barns and whose soul was required of him; *Resurrection* is the story of the woman taken in adultery. Nowhere, however, has Tolstoy applied himself to the task of elucidating what he regards as the one important stage in individual existence more thoroughly than in the philosophical work known as *Life*, a book to which, on account of its especial value as a key to Tolstoy's method and belief,

and also because the English public seems to be in no way familiar with it, I propose to devote the following brief analysis.[1] I use sometimes Tolstoy's language, and sometimes my own, supplying an occasional commentary, and also illustrations from other works of Tolstoy, where such a device seems necessary. The work, however, is singularly complete in itself. It does not examine the practical consequences of its doctrine, as to which Tolstoy's life and his more directly didactic writings furnish a finished and consistent key. It is concerned purely with what Mr. Morley has called 'the bright dawn of life in the soul', and in its arrangement is a continuous treatise on human nature, without regard either to religious dogma or to earlier philosophical conceptions. In a word, it is a thoroughly original and powerful work of self-examination, with consequences that seem to me to be of the deepest importance to the life of our times.

Tolstoy introduces his subject with an illustration drawn from the life of a miller who, though tradition has taught him that the business of his life is to grind good corn, has been led to find his interest in the observation of the mechanism of the mill. He has traced this back from the mill to the grindstone, from the grindstone to the mill-race, from the mill-race to the dam, and from the dam to the river. Finally, instead of concentrating all his thought and effort on the kind of flour which he is grinding, he devotes it entirely to the study of the river. There, he thinks, lies the true secret of the mill. This mill is life, the corn is the good that life should produce. The miller's mistake comes from the materialist idea of examining non-conscious or remote phenomena and their supposed causes as a key to the mystery of human nature. That key, says Tolstoy, with the Cartesians, is to be found only in the application of the old Greek saying 'Know thyself'. Modern science, seeking the origin of physical life either in the examination of the infinitely little or of the most rudimentary forms of organic matter, makes the same mistake (if we

[1] I cannot recommend the English translation of this work. An authorized French translation is published by Marpon and Flammarion, Paris, under the title *De la Vie*. The translation is the joint work of the Countess Tolstoy and of the Brothers Tastevin, of Moscow.

may vary the metaphor of the miller) as a man who, in examining the objects on the skyline, might imagine, from their greater clearness and simplicity of outline, that they are more easily visible than the objects which lie immediately around him.

The error, however, is not merely an error of degree, but of kind, and it opens the way to interminable difficulties. Man can know himself thoroughly. Less certainly can he know other men, especially those lower forms of human life on the investigation of which thinkers of the type of Mr. Spencer lay so much stress. Less certainly still can he know plants, and least certainly of all, lifeless matter. The truth is that, while he thinks or is taught that what is defined by time and space is easily understood by him, the precise contrary is the fact. Such words as 'He loves me', 'a good man', though the idea represented is not defined by time and space, are perfectly clear to him – much clearer, for example, than is his notion of the law of gravity. In fact, he sees existence on three planes: (1) rational beings; (2), animals and plants; (3), inanimate matter; really because these categories correspond to three objects of self-knowledge, placed on three descending planes of perception. In other words, man knows himself first as a rational being ruling the animal; secondly, as an animal governed by what Tolstoy calls 'rational consciousness' (*la conscience réfléchie*); and thirdly, as matter governed by the animal. The materialist view is therefore doomed to sterility on account both of its unpractical method and of its ignorance of the character of the problem with which it has to deal. A man must cease gazing down at the bewildering flow of the river of physical life, and get back to his business.

Orthodox science however, is not, in Tolstoy's view, the only force in modern intellectual life which has set the mind of man on the wrong track. Just such another offender is the Church – the 'Pharisees' who unite with the 'Scribes' in a pessimistic and unpractical conclusion about life. Life, says science, is to be explained by the examination of physical laws which in man's own body are performed unconsciously and independently of him – and therefore cannot be fully

known – and which, in external matter, cannot even be understood by him.[1] Life, says the Church, consists in preparing, by means of the Sacraments or through Faith, for a future existence, which, in contrast with the life of labour and suffering, of which alone we have any idea, shall be, in Tolstoy's ironic description of it, 'immortal, innocent, and idle'.[2] Both these views abandon the sensible meliorist conclusion which Tolstoy adopts – namely, that man can act for his own well-being, that he can act here and now, and that his enlightened reason, his 'rational consciousness', fully reveals to him the law of life of which he stands in need. Our inquiry, therefore, is driven on to the question: What is human nature, and how are the demands of that nature to be satisfied?

Here Tolstoy partially accepts the conclusion at which the pessimistic philosophers of all ages, from Solomon to Schopenhauer, have arrived. There is the animal personality of man – his 'Will' – and there is his Reason, by which he observes the workings of his animal self, and has a conception of other human beings like himself. The animal *Ego* has a vigorous inclination towards life, an inclination which cannot be gratified; while the rational *Ego*, having no such inclination, critically observes the passions of its animal part and condemns and rejects them. With this purely negative conclusion, pessimism ceases to consider the question of life, and therefore, as Tolstoy has pointed out, its logical conclusion is suicide.

But this contradiction, on which pessimistic philosophy dwells, is also felt by all men. The discovery of it is the source of all our unhappy musing and poetizing literature, as well as of the actual volume of misery of which the world is full. Man desires first of all his own well-being – that is the first great life-impulse. But no sooner does he begin to aim consciously at this end than he makes some alarming and disturbing discoveries. He finds, first, that this conception of life, as the attainment of personal bliss, is shared by others on whom he depends for his own welfare, but who equally with

[1] Compare Malebranche's saying that we know the existence of the soul more distinctly than that of the body.

[2] For a full analysis of this view of Tolstoy it is better for the reader to consult *My Religion*, especially Chapter VII.

him desire *their* happiness, and consider *their* lives to be all-important. Secondly, even if these hostile personalities can be subdued to his will, as he advances in physical life pleasures decrease and sufferings increase. The effort to obtain pleasure must always be enhanced, but the result grows smaller and smaller. Thirdly, he finds that life ends in death, which is the extinction of personal delight. And last and most disconcerting discovery of all, he discovers that, while his individual life perishes, the general stream of life, in which he has no interest, goes on for ever.

How afflicting are these revelations the sensitive minds who furnish us with our poetry and literature testify.

Let me give two examples, which seem to me to illustrate Tolstoy's analysis with special force. Claudio, the egoist and man of pleasure, finds himself in the prison cell face to face with the spectre he has tried to keep at a distance all his life. To him, though not to his sister, the noble Isabella, the thought of the determination of his physical existence, the dissolution of his well-kept body, is in the last degree terrifying and repulsive:

> 'To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod'. . . .

– this, indeed, is a fearsome prospect. But this death of the body is not simply a thing which a man meets 'at the end of the passage'. It is a presence that attends him all through his conscious life, which thus tends to become a continual death. To my mind no utterance in literature expresses this feeling more powerfully and directly than the words which Maupassant puts into the mouth of the cynical poet, Norbert de Varenne:—

'For fifteen years [says de Varenne] I have felt her [death] tormenting me as if I bore in my body an animal that gnawed and gnawed. Little by little, month by month, hour by hour, I have felt her assaults on me as on a house that is crumbling to pieces. She has disfigured me so completely that I do not recognize myself. I have no longer anything left of me – of the cheerful, fresh, and vigorous man that I was when I was twenty years old. I have seen her, with slow and malign

calculation, dying my black hair white. She has taken away from me my firm flesh, my muscles, my teeth, every particle of the body that I once possessed, leaving me only a despairing soul, which she will soon take away as well. Yes, she has picked me to pieces. She has accomplished slowly and terribly the long ruin of my being; and now in every act that I do I feel myself dying – every step brings me nearer to her – every movement, every breath, accelerates her odious work. Breathing, sleeping, drinking, eating, working, dreaming, everything that we do is dying. Life itself is death.'

Thus speaks the average sensual man, and always has spoken, articulately through the pessimist poets and writers, inarticulately through the sense of *ennui* which luxurious or pleasureable living excites. The practical question which Tolstoy asks is – Is there, then, no way out of this horror, no solving of the contradiction implied in the striving of the individual for his personal happiness and the knowledge, which life in all its aspects reveals to him, that no such happiness is attainable, or if attainable momentarily, is secure? Tolstoy's answer to this question is an old and simple one, but its interest lies in its close application to the facts of modern life and its acute and practical analysis of the dealings of human consciousness.

First of all, what is life? Science can give no answer to this question. It seeks to explore the laws and relations of force without defining what force is. Furthermore, in observing the struggle for life which goes on in animals, it declares that that struggle is the source of life itself and its real business, thus placing itself in easy agreement with the coarse herd – the practical Nietzsches of the world – who act on this principle. Finally, science, studying a higher kind of being only through the laws affecting lower beings, can never instruct a man as to how he is to act – i.e. can never constitute a safe guide to 'conduct'. It does not, for example, tell a man what he is to do with the piece of bread in his hand, whether he is to eat it himself or to give it away to another, or, if so, to whom he is to give it. On the other hand, all mankind, save its lowest types, have long had as their common patrimony that great body of religious teaching which, whether it is Indian or

Chinese or Christian in origin, unites in regarding life not as the pursuit of individual happiness but as the sacrifice of self. All these religions are penetrated by the conviction of the irrationality of the purely individual life, whether this is lived either for oneself or whether the circle of individual pursuit is enlarged so as to include one's family or one's country – let me add, one's Empire. The faculty of reason, working through man's greatest teachers, whom he reverences even when he does not follow them, thus informs the individual that personal happiness cannot exist for him. So that the first operation of reason on man is to poison his existence – to bring him face to face with a terrible contradiction and to leave him a prey to it. It says to him, 'Look at the tranquil, self-satisfied animal, knowing its own wants and knowing nothing else. And then look at yourself, who are never satisfied'. Man cannot at first untie this knot, so more and more frequently he cuts it, as Tolstoy himself thought of cutting it, by suicide. At this stage of experience life seems to come to a dead stop, but, adds Tolstoy, it only seems to stop: really, it has just begun.

What now is the second function of rational consciousness after it has expounded to man the futility of his animal life? In the reasoning which follows there is much to remind the reader of Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*, to which it is clear that Tolstoy is in some measure indebted. Arnold, however, with all his seriousness and insight, does not possess Tolstoy's constant faith, his deep affectionateness, and his broad and noble optimism, and therefore the writings of the earlier religious thinker, while they have the persuasiveness which belongs to his successor, lack the moral elevation which gives to *Life* the character of a great poem of humanity. But to resume.

The 'call', says Tolstoy, is to a new and high activity of reason, in obedience to the essential law of man's life. Just as the animal discovers that it will not do for it simply to obey the more elementary laws of its being, namely, to lie still and breathe, but that it must follow the higher law of seeking for food and reproducing its species, so rational consciousness arouses man to search for the path of his true well-being.

This is not an accidental but an inevitable process. The spiritual birth, like the natural birth, occurs because the tabernacle of the old life is destroyed. It is true that in spiritual birth the process is hidden. We do not see the processes of this change as we see them in the life of animals and of plants, or in the beginning of the physical life of man. Moreover, the former kind of transformation is never a complete result; it is always an incomplete process.

'Man never is but always to be blest.'

Mysterious, however, as is this new birth, and mortally depressing as are its first painful experiences, there is nothing about them to dismay the mind of man. He has got to the point which Schopenhauer describes, of surveying his animal life and disapproving it. But, as Tolstoy insists, his new life is progress in an entirely new direction from the old. It is progress upwards. His wings have carried him, without his knowing, to a height from which he looks down on the abyss and is terrified at it. But he forgets that if he had not wings he could not have raised himself at all to this altitude of contemplation. His true course, therefore, is not to look down but to trust to his wings, and go freely whither they carry him. One thought in particular should give him confidence. The difference between him and the animals is at once shown. An animal ceasing to work for its individual welfare ceases also to live. On the contrary, life – and a life essentially healthy and natural to him – opens itself out to the man who has taken this course. Moreover, he cannot go back. If he will not renounce voluntarily the pursuit of individual well-being, this conclusion comes to him forcibly by the dissolution of his body at his death. Like the horse, he has been led out of the stable and harnessed. If the horse tries to lie down and kick he may kill himself. But if he lives, his master, finding him stubborn, will put him to the mill, and instead of allowing him comparatively free motion with a carriage, forces him to learn the law of his life in a harder fashion. So with man's animal personality. Its business is to be worn out in the doing of its Master's work. It is the spade which must be dulled and sharpened again for use, not merely polished

and laid carefully away. 'He that saveth his life shall lose it.'

Yet another consideration drives man inevitably along the road of his new life. The condition of his individual well-being is that all other men should love him and serve him more than they love and serve themselves. But every other man has this idea about his own personality. Therefore happiness can only be realized when all creatures live for the good of others. The strife among the pleasure-seekers turns the world into a vast battle-field, though convention hides from us the intensity and cruelty of the struggle. On the other hand, the past history of man shows him that the true movement of life consists in the diminution of this war between individuals and in an approach to human brotherhood and unity. Everywhere humane feeling grows. People even try to humanize war; they treat animals more mercifully; they discourage destructive habits; they praise martyrs and people who die in the act of saving or trying to save their fellows, while the better side of science occupies itself in increasing the uniting factors in society. Finally, the transference of happiness from the individual takes away the fear of death. This exists in full force when everything for a man depends on his own life; but when his life centres in others, to whom his death is a matter of indifference, or even a gain, death has lost its sting. Reason, history, and feeling all unite in convincing the awakened and enlightened man that he has indeed discovered the true law of his being, and that:

'Death once dead – there's no more dying then'.

At this point Tolstoy has to answer the question which naturally arises to his theory, that this door of rational life which always stands open is not perceived by all men, and is certainly not entered by great bodies of them. To this he makes a double answer, which is deeply bound up with his criticism of modern civilization. In this first place, he insists that the true conception of life is hidden from men by their cultivated teachers, whose main concern it is to declare that human progress consists in the development and increase of individual wants, forgetting that, as Emerson says, 'Want is a giant which the coat of Have can never cover'. They also

forget that rational life, that is to say, mutual service, guarantees the satisfaction of necessary wants (men occupied in ministry to each other will not suffer each other to starve), and thus answers, simply and finally, the question what we shall eat and wherewithal we shall be clothed. A great body of men, moreover, by the conditions of their daily existence, are never quite misled by this false teaching of the sophisticated modern world. Setting aside the seers and spiritual leaders, there are the simple, unlettered folk who live a more or less healthy life (in the country rather than in the towns), based largely on the doctrine of helping one another and bearing one another's burdens. The peasant, whose little bundle of wants is not unduly swollen, and does not press on other people's wants, knows more of the true meaning of life than the highly civilized man and his teachers. Tolstoy is never tired of enforcing this idea. His readers will remember a passage in *Anna Karenina*, in which Levin, groping about for light about his life, finds it at last in a chance word of one of his field-workers, who says to him that a good man lives not for his belly but for God and the soul. Among the common folk, therefore, Tolstoy finds an abiding witness of the truth of his opinion. It is worth remembering that another modern thinker and artist has, like him, sought diligently for an adequate definition of the end of life, and having fallen back on the idea of self-sacrifice, expresses it finally through the mouth of the clown, Parsifal – 'the guileless fool', enlightened by pity for human unhappiness and error.

Rational consciousness has thus led man, by one road or another, to the discovery that the one reasonable activity of mankind is Love,[1] which rids him at once of the fears that beset his animal existence and his old absorbing, but essentially morbid, interest in the end of that existence. What is the natural manifestation of this activity? Tolstoy insists on some essential qualities. Love must be universal and complete. It must extend to all men, and it must amount to nothing less than the surrender of self. Therefore it must be a present

[1] It is clear that this definition carries us much farther than Aristotle's incomplete definition – which is never completed – of happiness as an activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue.

and not a future love. A man possessed with true love cannot, for example, postpone the giving of bread to a starving brother because he reflects that his own children may one day need bread. The love which measures one kind of love against another is simply an extension of individual self-seeking to other personalities. A man loves his wife and child because they are part of his personal happiness and minister to his individual life. That is not love at all, though it may be the stock from which true love may spring. It is the instinctive animal habit, which, as it is really contrary to the supreme law of human life, manifests itself, not harmlessly, as in the animal, but with terrible and wounding consequences to society and to the individual. Wolves unconsciously love their own stock, and know nothing of other wolves' love for theirs. But man cannot do this. Being reasonable, he knows that his circle of private loves conflicts with other loves, and these opposing, and really selfish affections, if they are not subordinated to the law of reason, will turn him into the most cruel and malignant of animals. Love, in a word, is not the preference of some people to others. It is the preference of all others to one's self. It is a state of goodwill (*bienveillance*) to all the world – a state which is common to children, who are fond of everybody, and who do not, until later on in their lives, learn to discriminate and calculate between one kind of affection and another. The plant of true life turns instinctively to the light, and seeks it wherever the rays of love – the sun of man's existence – find entrance.

The later chapters of the remarkable work with which I have chiefly, though not entirely, dealt, concern themselves with a metaphysical analysis of death. 'What is death?' asks Tolstoy, as he has previously asked the corresponding question, 'What is life?' He answers that there is no death, and adds that this answer is not a mere sophistry, but a necessary deduction from the facts of consciousness. To begin with, it is clear that man does not know his own death, and cannot know it, for it has never touched him. Why, therefore, does he fear it? Not because it is a change, for changes in man's bodily life continually take place, until in process of time they transform every atom of it. Man's body is not one, but

a succession of different states of consciousness. Nor does man fear death because it is repugnant to reason. Other men, and also animals, die, and their death is natural, or even agreeable, to him. Even the materialist theory strips death of much of its terrors. Life in this view is an accidental spark kindled in dead matter and dying out again – i.e. death, not life, is to the materialist the normal state. But for the rational being death is utterly cast out. He conceives his life as having no physical beginning or end, while death is to him a mere accident in the movement of matter.

No; the fear of death arises from the old contradiction between the two opposing views of life. A man feels that he ought to have real life, and does not have it. That this is his actual feeling is shown by the action of suicides, who rush to death because they fear false life. Emptiness and darkness are men's postulates about death, but they fix their eyes on this blank because real life is not apparent to them.

The natural man, however, has still his reply ready to these arguments. He has lived so many years now, fifty, sixty, seventy – this term, he sees, is coming to an end. Not at all, replies Tolstoy, in the chapter which I now summarize. Your *Ego* – your real self – is not a body which has gone on with its mechanical work for so many years. It is a something which thinks and feels, always differently. 'You' are not the 'you' of twenty or ten years ago. Not only is your body changed in every particle from what it was, but even your consciousness has been suspended – as every day by sleep.[1] It has also been divided into successive and well-marked stages of consciousness, such as boyhood and youth.

What, therefore, is this *Ego* with which you are concerned? The only definition which holds is that it is a creature having some exclusive relation to the world – a relation of loving this and not loving that. In other words, this *Ego* of yours is a being independent of time, and therefore not to be destroyed by a temporal process. You would not be frightened

[1] Tolstoy does not note the phenomena of dreams, which further illustrate his view. In sleep we often dream that we are boys again, but we are never boys in reality. We are carried into the boyish state, but with the man's feelings and opinions. We are simply men masquerading in short jackets or knickerbockers.

if you knew that when you went to bed you would sleep for a million years. Nor are you terrified because, from being a red-fleshed little animal called a baby, having no consciousness, you have grown to be a reflecting man – an entirely different person. And this life of yours is an unending movement, involving continual changes in your relationship to the world – i.e. in the degree of love which you entertain for it. Stop that movement and death indeed presents itself robed in all its terrors. Go on loving and loving more and you mix more and more with the eternal movement of life.[1] Death, then, presents itself only as one of a series of modifications which did not begin with your birth, and cannot end with the dissolution of the worn-out tent in which your animal personality happens to reside at the actual moment when that personality is dissolved.

On this high strain Tolstoy's dealing with the problem of life as a rational conception comes to an end. It is not necessary for me to point out the relations of that theory to the central thought of Christianity. That relation is best summed up in the words of the aged Goethe to Eckermann:—

'As soon as the pure doctrine and love of Christ are comprehended in their true nature, and have become a vital principle, we shall feel ourselves as human beings, great and free, and not attach especial importance to a degree more or less in the outward forms of religion. Besides, we shall all gradually advance from a Christianity of words and faith to a Christianity of feeling and action.'

It is to the attempt to realize this 'Christianity of feeling and action' that Count Tolstoy's life and his intellectual and artistic work are devoted – an effort which has brought him, like his Master, into conflict with every established authority in the modern world. When will his conception of the advent of the enlightened man – whom he continually calls the Son of God – be realized in the history of humanity? We cannot tell. Certain it is that such a witness to it cannot be denied. It is there – at once accusing and comforting. For with Tolstoy,

[1] Compare the saying of S. Theresa: 'We must no longer think, we must love much.'

and men like Tolstoy, light comes into the world, and we feel that in its sacred radiance the common life of man is transfigured and absorbed.

From the 'Contemporary' of December, 1900.

NOTE

My father was much preoccupied with Tolstoy's teaching as he was with the Christian religion, and this is the noblest and most eloquent vindication of Tolstoy's beliefs I have ever read. But it must not be taken as final acceptance of Manichæism. All his life he oscillated between a moral passion for Puritanism and an intellectual and æsthetic revolt from it, and I do not think he ever really resolved the disharmony. In spite of his elasticity of temper, his humour rare in quality though not in event, his passion for art, his intellectual tolerance and breadth of view, he had a stern mind, and his perpetual war, 'the old, the undying war', as Whitman says, against the evil of his times did not tend to relax it. His Puritan stock and upbringing from which he was sometimes escaping and to which sometimes returning were another factor which brought him under the sway of Tolstoy.

This is not merely a brilliant apology for Tolstoy's morality, but one of a profound and spiritual feeling. Yet we can see at once that it will not do. To love all men through the renunciation of the natural human relationships is a contradiction in terms, and it is a perfectly useless doctrine, because it is very certain that mankind will never practise it. Tolstoy himself was a living example of the falsity of his own dogmas. He disliked the natural man no less than his institutions; he hated the love he preached unless it was so wide as to be meaningless. A love which extends to all men is given to none; we never can and we never shall love all men, though we can love the human nature in them, great and small, a nature which Tolstoy regarded as an enemy of the spirit. Tolstoy only loved men if they would subscribe to his doctrine: if not, he arraigned them with the cold majesty of his genius. Like the Christian Fathers, he saw life as a struggle between the flesh and the spirit, and so was led to condemn beauty and love between man and woman as a baited hook of the

devil, in which he saw exactly eye to eye with the materialists. And so by different routes, he was led into such absurdities as the *Kreutzer Sonata*, his acceptance of the peasant mentality as the final criterion, simply because the peasant worked with his hands, his rejection of beauty and human love because they implied harmony between flesh and spirit, which to him was harmony between God and the devil. How untrue, how neo-Darwinian, for instance, is the pseudo-scientific generalization that 'an animal ceasing to work for its individual welfare ceases also to live'! And it says a great deal for his magnificent courage and resolution to live up to his own perverse and arid view of true spirituality that he ended by condemning his own novels, the grandest projections of the intensely living and loving human spirit into an imaginative form of our age.

Clutton Brock condemned Tolstoy because he saw in government and authority and institutions something imposed on mankind arbitrarily from without. 'If only the natural man could free himself from these he would live well.' But Tolstoy was right in calling attention to this imposition by his vision, because he can be proved to have been right by historical fact, by ethnological evidence. The trouble is – what are we to fall back upon? Clutton Brock is wrong in accusing Tolstoy of falling back upon the natural man, because the natural man with his human ties and loves was anathema to him. Only by a violent renunciation of them could the natural man be saved. Tolstoy, again, condemned institutions *qua* institutions. Surely there is a middle course between Clutton Brock's defence and Tolstoy's repudiation of them, and that is to judge them according as they express or deny the true nature of man, a nature which can now be psychologically and scientifically ascertained. In bringing our institutions into closer relation with the nature of man, we shall be applying to another plane the harmony between flesh and spirit achieved in art and in human love. Certainly we cannot love all men by casting out as unclean the stuff of which they are made – as Tolstoy and our institutions between them have done their best to do.

I would like to quote here a delightful passage from one

of my father's private letters which points out very succinctly what he thought about Puritanism – in one mood: 'The Cathedral [Wells, Somerset; whither I went a jaunt with him] is the sweetest day's dream in the world, less religious and more human and poetical than most of the French great churches: it makes one feel how much art depends on joy and simplicity in the heart, and how beautifully the English character once lent itself to such playfulness. I have never seen anything quite so enchanting as the view of the choir and Lady chapel, which closes in with the golden window: it is really a sort of antechamber to the New Jerusalem. And it is nearly pure humanity. You remember the chapter house? It's as if God took a palm-tree in his hand, breathed on it, and set it down for a cherubs' Committee Room.

'The accursed Puritans have done their best to mar this gem; but it shines through all their ape-like scratchings.'

Here too is an undress view of Tolstoy, taken from another letter: 'I read *Resurrection* over again the other day. The comedy is really magnificent: all the society scenes interleaved with the prison scenes, show how Tolstoy never could help being an artist. The more of one the harder he preached.' At least we can say that no man ever tried harder to kill the artist in himself – with the usual results of unnatural repression.—H.J.M.

LIKE most of my countrymen (and every other kind of countryman) I am a heathen, with religious intervals. Religion, as I have explained, was introduced to me in the person of the unpleasant Jehovah, and became terrifying through its picture of the life after death, and ridiculous in the light of my childish analysis of the life of the people who practised it. I knew (though I dared not say so) that the God of my Fathers was little better than a devil,[1] but I also realized that while this conception was something to me, it had little meaning for my fellow-Jahvists. They, indeed, had little gods of their own. They were not Christians. The noble and sincere ones, like my Mother, believed in Duty, and lived by it, while they showed the stern face of the Puritan to the world and its pleasures, and looked forward to a Heaven, passionless save for the joy of meeting the one whom they loved. The rest were mere Tellurians. The shop was their world and their otherworld; the chapel the place where they enjoyed the little measure of power or consideration that the shop-keeping life denied them. What spiritual home was here for an imaginative youth, beginning to read Shelley and Byron, Voltaire and Strauss, Arnold and *Supernatural Religion*, and satirical analyses of the Old Testament story, till he knew the answer to the stock arguments of a 'faith' which he also knew to be no faith at all? Having flung it away as I did, my alternative scheme of salvation would have been in devotion to the literary art. But I was alone. The only being whom I loved, and who had any power of God over me, was dead, and there opened to me, together, the two great dissipations of the newspaper and the theatre. The latter, indeed, was more than a dissipation. I can any day live over again the childish thrill of expectant joy that shook the guilty soul of the boy of sixteen when the curtain rose on his first play. The play was *Madame Angot*. I loved its cloying melodies, and I saw no more harm in its cynicism than I read sensuality into my child's gift-book of the *Arabian Nights*. There was a time, a little later on, when the theatre became a little hell-porch to me, but the worst

[1] Anatole France's *Ialdabaoth*. Zeus-Dios-Dis-Jar-Jovi-Jahveh (H. J. M.)

thing about the drama of the 'seventies was that the food supplied to it by Robertson, H. J. Byron, Charles Reade, and Tom Taylor, was far too thin to satisfy the hungry fancies of sixteen. Shakespeare might have done it; but Shakespeare was then in the hands of 'star' pot-wallopers, fearfully shadowed by troops of 'supers'. There, save for a very rare flash from Sheridan and Goldsmith, all the light that the theatre could cast on the dull, incurious life of an English provincial city came to an end. Not a wavelet from the great romantic movement ever reached our shores. No help here for young souls that had lost their way. As for music, which did flourish, in one brilliant organist at the Cathedral, a great Bach player, in the Festivals (Handel, Mendelssohn and insipid English contemporaries), and in demi-semi-classical concerts, it had been so villainously taught to me that both its grammar and syntax were almost unknown, and its spiritual delights, vaguely and at rare intervals passionately indulged, neither braced the mind for a finer contact with life, nor sensibly quickened the imagination.

And then there was the newspaper office. I have described my life there, and certainly it was extremely pleasant, yielded me at least one ennobling influence, and at its worst was by no means all evil. But I caught up with it at a difficult angle. Nearly every member had some kind of a religion. Its professor now and then exchanged it for another, or, after a lecture on Evolution, for none at all. But usually it was no more than Minister-worship, and of that I had seen enough. The thing that did me some good was that here at least, after the hypocritical gloom of the Chapel, and the severity of the Puritan home, was a sense of pagan enjoyment. To a young reporter on a provincial paper all the fun of the town is Open Sesame. And with my love of pleasure this was at once a relief from the excessive strain of my schooldays, and also, alas! a dispensation from my school habit of hard and regular study. The mind, suddenly emptied of its best furniture, soon found room for the little devils of provincial life – amusement-hunting, passing loves, and the gossipy idleness which is two-thirds of journalism.

But if it be true that both the Anglican and the Roman can

leave the torment of religion behind him, it rarely lets the child of Puritanism alone. Again two conflicting streams of tendency came in at the hour when, with the fearful withdrawal of my brother's fine and strong intelligence, all spiritual direction seemed to be lost. Helper No. 1 was my Swedenborgian editor. Helper No. 2 was the Minister at the Octagon Chapel, once the resort of the Martineaus and of many a famous Unitarian Elder, which I frequented, much to the scandal of the orthodox. The latter was a born *raisonneur*, who supplied, from a very well-stored mind, a scornful commentary on the rather abundant omissions in the Evangelical reading of the Canon. I remember one sermon of his from the text: 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' whose effect on me I can only compare to the delighted thrill of a plunge, years after, into the ice-cold water of a Norwegian fjord. Mr. Spilling's influence was quite different. His thinking had been fed from a narrower culture than Mr. Perris's, being in fact the fruit of a life's study of Swedenborg, with a little Berkeley thrown in, and a mystic's reading of nineteenth-century poetry and romance.

This period had for him a great spiritual significance. It dated the second coming of Jesus, the recovery of man's belief in earth as 'a shadow of Heaven', that is to say, of a true criticism of life, a spiritual interpretation of the mystery of the universe. The grand elucidation had been made by Swedenborg, but Blake and Wordsworth and Shelley, and even the lesser Victorians, all helped it on. Darwinism he ridiculed. Its theory of selection was a mere piling of accident on accident, and therefore not science; a banishing of mind from the universe, and therefore irreligious and inhuman. Years later this view was brilliantly expounded by Butler and Shaw, and Martineau's magnificent prose first fixed in my mind the conception that never left it – that the truth about things which reached the higher levels of man's thoughts could not be expressed in terms of materialism.

But this was not the way in which Spilling really helped me, so far as my inborn wilfulness, and tendency to break away from the fatigue of thought into mere exciting experiences, ever allowed of spiritual help from without. He made me see

Christianity as a lovable thing. In theory the devout Swedenborgian, unlike Blake, identifies Jehovah and Christ. But in practice he separates them. Spilling, a simple and paternally kind nature, hated the Puritan's inhibition on art (he adored the theatre, then regarded in chapel-going Norwich as the way to the Pit), and despised the mean, money-changer's life into which, save for politics, the average Nonconformist's activities flowed. Thus the Jesus he expounded to me was really not unlike Blake's Deliverer from Jahvism. Only he called Him God, while I found a Man, and His coming in this human guise did usher in for me a return to sunlight.

To the sacramental Churches I was not drawn. The journalist in me was sensible that the movement that way in the Anglican Church was almost over, while the tremendous speed at which science began to walk, opening out new avenues of thought (not, as Martineau showed, necessarily material ones) with every stride, turned the really inquiring eyes in her direction. No sensitive mind but is emotionally stirred when it first grasps the meaning of Catholic ceremonial as expressed in the Mass and in Benediction. If the soul could thus be renewed by a recurring act of communion with the Divine, what a simple thing the spiritual life became! But the literalness of the intervening symbol repelled me. I could no more read its dark metaphysic into the story of the Last Supper than I could see the worldlings of the Wesleyan Chapel refined by their belief in redemption by the Blood. But at least the Nonconformist was right on one point – his refusal to accept Christianity in the form of a political institution. Politics were run by politicians. One knew the political character, which did not in the least degree resemble the saintly character, or the poetic character, or the free, lovable character with weaknesses, such as the Christian humanists, like Dickens or Dostoievsky, liked to draw. It was worldly, it was limited, above all, it was unoriginal. It never led anything, it merely accepted. So with the Churches. They accepted capitalism; they accepted war; what would they not accept so only they could retain their hold on society, and make its evil seem good, with no transformation of the soul, or of the daily practice? Thus it was that, to the sceptical eye of the journalist, the Church lacked all power. It

was a make-believe. The world despised it, knowing it could be bought, or at least easily compromised with, and that all that the Church could retort on its rival was to frighten it a little with its incantations. But the fire was out: the Church, as Blake declared, had grown 'cold', and, in its soul-relation to the world, was practically functionless. It did not even dispense its Sacraments. It sold them to those who had, while those who had not did without them, and lived on such stores of love, peace, health, and leisure, as the greed of the Powers that were, sacred and secular, left over.

But Jesus, one felt, was not like that. And going back to the Bible, and with the aid of modern criticism simplifying the story of His life, as the imaginative reader loves to simplify it, I saw it was elemental stuff, and that out of it was made all the goodness I had ever come in contact with. Thus there was truth in Swedenborg's vision of Christ as the Grand Man, who somehow came in to save the world from being destroyed by its own selfishness, as well as by its tendency to go on believing what was no longer believable. This model of true living was always being lost and always being rediscovered. In this sense the 'Coming of Jesus' of the orthodox was a religious truth. It was a going back, like Christian after his lost scroll, to the foundations of society.

These things I realized intellectually a little later in my life than the period I am now describing, though, alas! I rarely applied them to my personal conduct. I found this objective Christianity in Ruskin, in the great Romantics, particularly in Hugo, above all in Tolstoy.

All through this period I was melancholy by fits and starts. But the melancholy of young men whose circumstances are happy, as mine then were, is largely a joke; its reality comes later, in the shadow and foretaste of death, when, as Tolstoy says, though we 'live on', living seems to have come to an end. Nevertheless, the discontinuous, unsatisfying, immoral life of journalism turns even young men to pessimists, or rather cynics, before their time. It feeds restlessness by more restlessness, and that certainly is no cure. So it was with me. At that time I had little that was positive in my intellectual life, save the satisfaction that one has in a growing ease and mastery

in one's work. Church-going I had abandoned, except for an occasional visit to Stopford Brooke's chapel, where the attraction was partly æsthetic, partly intellectual, and partly, too, a half-amused sense of Brooke's personal charm and beauty, and of wonder how far he, like Thackeray's Honeyman, enjoyed it himself. Brooke preached poetic theism, making of Christ a beautiful but rather sentimental figure, a Carlo Dolce of the pulpit. But I had begun to get some politico-religious ideas of my own, which I have never abandoned. The Socialist Movement in England had begun, and Socialists, Christian and non-Christian, bothered little about other-worldliness. The former were of the Sacramental school, Anglican branch, and individually, I imagine, they assumed that they were as much 'saved' as they were ever likely to be. But being profoundly convinced that the rich, unless they mended their ways, must infallibly be damned, their main concern was with the unsound condition of industrial England. With this healthy school I came in contact soon after my journey to London. The leader was Stewart Headlam, best and simplest of men, who, though a born pastor of souls, could never get a cure of them in London, because the bishop failed to share his enthusiasm for the Milanese ballet, which he regarded as an exclusively religious exercise. The other half of his creed was Land Nationalization, and through him I came in contact with Henry George. He was my first introduction to the man of genius. George was taken here for a type of the American crank, but he never talked like one, being in fact one of the great natural thinkers who reduce the detail of life to pure vision. Doubtless he was one-idea'd. He saw society restored to happiness by the way of land-restoration, and that, in its turn, achieved by the method of the single tax. At one time that idea, as the popularity of the wonderfully written *Progress and Poverty* showed, looked as if it would capture the whole democratic movement, leaving it, as the Crusades left Christian Europe, in a state of complete disillusion. Its final and useful function was to implant in an urban population the almost lost sense of their right to the land, i.e. to its enjoyment in a properly organized State. Henry George was just the type of man to fix a moral idea such as this. All the Socialist leaders of my time and before

it – Marx, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Hyndman, Shaw – even William Morris – were middle-class intellectuals, some of them sophisticated intellectuals. George, the ex-compositor, was a man of the people, a Rousseau without Rousseau's vices. He drew direct from life, expressing his thought with the simplicity of Cobden and Bastiat, but with more feeling.

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NOTE

This poignant and revealing essay was to have made an opening chapter in my father's Reminiscences, to have been published by Mr. Jonathan Cape this year. Anybody can see from this fragment of them what a wonderful book was in his mind. Because it is an unfinished chapter of his autobiography, I have not meddled with the abruptness of its close. It is very interesting to compare it with the essay on Tolstoy which precedes it. My father's adhesion to Tolstoy was certainly not a surrender of his whole self. But I think that, finally, the passage: 'In this sense, the "Coming of Jesus" of the orthodox was a religious truth. It was a going back, like Christian after his lost scroll, to the foundations of society' – was.

Here is a passage from the correspondence written at the time he was meditating to embark upon the book of Reminiscences: 'I came back (from a holiday) quite strange to myself and the world: rejoiced to be rid of the idle little tea-party that calls itself Liberalism, and yet not exactly wanting to sign on to anything else – in fact impolitical and dreamy to a degree that makes me hardly know myself. Fancy! I've been offered £1,000 and a big royalty on my "Reminiscences". And all I think is – shall I, dare I say what I want to say, or give it up altogether?'

It will interest the reader to quote a few passages from the private letters about religion. I have deliberately picked them at random, and they are in no sense consecutive. But they do give you H. W. M.

'But I must still cry, "Eternity, be thou my refuge!" even though I never expect any voice to answer me; indeed knowing that no voice can ever come.'

'I don't hate religion, but the religious, who make it impossible. Christian art wasn't all Christian. And Christianity can't exist merely in art: it comes from the spirit of man, and when its power to move him goes, no mere institutionalism will keep it alive. The letter kills; but with the false and the commonplace it is always the letter, never the spirit. Back to Jesus, yes. But back to his mind and thought. As for Christian lollipops – fears, hope, etc. – I despise them. The good hard *via crucis* for me. Am I hard? If I were not a little, I should kill myself in such a world as this.'

'Darkness is in my soul. I'm not fit company for anyone but myself. But I suppose it is all in some tremendous hands, whose least motion is unknown to us, though here and there, now and then –?'

'Holy Communion. I rather draw back from the horrific region of Abra-cadabra and Hocus-Pocus. How simple the original story: "I am going from you. When you break bread, remember me, and when you drink; for I am giving my life for you, and I should not like you to forget that and me." And out of all that the Mass and the Priesthood. No; it's not for me, nor, I think, ever will be.'

'Like all sinners, I'm fond of Jesus Christ, but I never make any effort to do what he tells me to do. Somehow this world has slipped out of his control, and yet, if it knew, would find in him a quite happy and easy way of living. That is the tragedy of our life. All refinements of thought and feeling come down to the simplest elements, but though reason and conscience tell the same tale, we won't be simplified.'

'The Church. Je m'en fiche! Did not the Church kill Jesus, and then miss his religion, so that instead of having Christianity without a church for only a kind of *association* of men of good will as the Quakers have, you have a mystical, non-material church without Christianity.

' – says the State is a harlot; the Church is a worse, because she dresses like a respectable woman.

'Thus she can do incalculable harm to society without society realizing it. It is she makes war *respectable*, when the State alone could not disguise its true character. And, with her wiles, she takes the sword of the spirit, smelts it down, and

instead of the flaming fiery brand we ought to have, it becomes a tin affair, fit to be used in (illegible word) processions, etc., etc.

'But Christianity exists? Yes. But it is the Atheists, Blasphemers, Heretics, Poets – Voltaire, Paine, Erasmus, Heine, Tolstoy who keep it alive. . . . I like Romans (as I don't like Protestants) because they don't despise human nature and have studied it. But no Roman trap for me!'

One more: 'Don't let the world reabsorb you. No peace there. Nor indeed anywhere. But a keen air in the desert, and now and again a Heavenly Visitor, oftener to you than to me.'

And last from a letter to Dr. Orchard, written towards the end of his life:

'I want to thank you for bringing me back to the love of Him who was always in my heart – though, alas! not in my life.'—H.J.M.

'We go to church and we enter into an atmosphere of calm. The distilled wisdom of the ages is about us. The oldest narratives of human history are read in our hearing, and through all familiarity of phrase the sincerity of the narrator forces itself upon us. The sense that we are at one with the singers of countless generations is an uplifting. Paul's exhortations stimulate our courage. In the teaching and the passion of the Gospels we follow the way of perfect life which leads to victory over death. All this may be possible in the closet. The sublimation of it may startle us as we walk along the streets. But the periodical withdrawal into these ancient houses of service, built with hands, helps us to dwell in houses not built with hands.' (*The Diary of a Churchgoer*. By Lord Courtney of Penwith.)

THE interesting articles by the Bishop of Norwich on the proposed revision of the Prayer-Book, suggest that a free lay opinion on the subject may not be distasteful. For neither in law nor in equity is the question one for the sole disposal of the clergy. The Church is a national society; the Prayer-Book is a national possession which, having long passed into the common thought and speech of Englishmen, is increasingly used, with or without adaptation, in Nonconformist Chapels, and cannot be revised without the assent of the English Parliament.

Yet one feels there is a difficulty. On the one hand, a section of the Church, advancing under the banner of self-government, would like more and more to subject her doctrine and formularies to purely ecclesiastical control. And, on the other, there is a laymen's party which feels that this kind of church bars them out. They would like to 'live for God', as Tolstoy says, and they realize that in such a world as this the eremite's faith is impossible, is even a little absurd. Churchgoing to them is still, in the language of the Prayer-Book, the most 'comfortable', as well as the most sacred happening of the week; yet they have a suspicion that a merely devout attitude and temper are unwanted, or even resented, by a section of the clergy,

unless and until they are joined to a greater definiteness about dogma than they feel or can profess. Therefore, even in their devotional intention, these people stand, like the publican, 'afar off'. And if the Prayer-Book were pointed a little more in the direction of high sacramental doctrine, as the promoters of an alternative Communion Service desire, and the more impassioned Anglo-Catholics behind them intend, they would fear that a form of interdict had been passed on them. They would still be under the draw and urge of the spiritual life, but they would no longer know where to go in order to satisfy it. Nonconformity chills, even repels, them. It is the individualist's creed, and in religion, at least, these men are not individualists.

But it may be asked, what right have such people as I have indicated to be regarded as members of the Anglican Church at all? Well, they have none, if the Church shuts her arms against them. They come to her by way of modern science, or philosophy, or the political life, much as Nicodemus came to her Master, and if their thought on these things be the cause of repulsion, they can be repelled. Take my own case. Knowing my own character as I do, or think I do, I disbelieve that any 'catastrophic' spiritual event, such as the Methodistic 'conversion', is likely to happen to it. Though I believe in the spiritual origin of life, I disbelieve in the possibility of professing an exact and coherent explanation of its mystery. I disbelieve in the doctrine and practice of literal sacramentalism, because it seems to me to sink religion in materialism, in an age when science is weaving, link by link, the means of escape from it. I disbelieve in (to me) unbelievable things like the Flood,[1] and I dismiss from my mind incomprehensible things, like the Virgin Birth. So in regard to the Bible as it is read in Church, I dislike some things in it, like the denunciatory Psalms, if only because they are so like my material, unregenerate self. And I stand aloof from others, such as the Pauline conception of Christ, just as I am drawn to the Christ of the Gospels.

Do such non-beliefs as these make me an anti-Christian or a

[1] Not unnaturally, considering that the story of the Flood was invented in pagan Egypt, and was closely associated with agricultural rites and the inundations of the Nile! (H.J.M.)

non-Christian? I do not think so. I live in a Christian world, and though I do not live a good life there, I cannot escape from it. Its institutions surround me; its ideal morality is the one to which I aspire; its criticism of life seems to me an essentially living one, for it strikes the worldliness of London at precisely the same angle as it struck the worldliness of Jerusalem, and its psychology seems to freshen with every new research that science makes into the outer and the inner character of man. So that even if I desire to leave Christianity, it will not leave me.

It is as an aid to this inevitable reattachment of the modern man to religion that the value, I had almost said the necessity, of the Anglican Church, and its broader, more inclusive formularies, comes in. The English Church of to-day still offers an open door to all those who regard religion as a thing of spirit and life, not a metaphysic; a means of common profession and aspiration, not merely of intensive spiritual culture. That it is a perfect organ of this spiritual aspiration no one can assert, or that its service is always at its best (as if the Bible, or Shakespeare, or anything to which man's thought or hand gives expression, were always at their best!) But its liturgy is a noble invocation of the finest in man; of his charity; his power to forgive the injuries of others as he hopes to be forgiven his own; of his wish for self-amendment, for escape from his besetting sins of pride, malice, envy, and that unimaginative hardness which is perhaps his worst fault; of his aspiration after truth; of his active benevolence; of the freedom of his will, and its final surrender to the Will of God, and of the promise, as the fruit of that surrender, of a mystical, though not inapprehensible, peace in the soul.

This is the spiritual stuff out of which have been fashioned immortal things like the Litany, the Collect for Peace, S. Chrysostom's Prayer, the Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men, the Exhortations in the Communion Service, and the Evening Collect. And millions of English men and women, gentle and simple, have joined in these petitions for hundreds of years – schoolboys dismissed with them into the twilight of winter afternoons, unlearned folk in country churches, learned ones in college chapels, all sorts and conditions of people, either as part of their spiritual routine, or in some intense and

decisive moment of personal or national experience. Doubtless they tend here and there to be a little temporal in tone, a little naïve in expression. The modern Englishman no longer prays for rain or fine weather, or even for victory in war; at least he has ceased to pray for them *ex animo* since he got to know that the God of the Universe is more and greater than a kind of Englishman's Zeus. The religious consciousness has gone on and carried him to higher levels.

But if in these wants and aspirations there is a modern case for the revision of the forms of the Prayer-Book, there is surely none for the kind of revision which the authors of the proposal for an alternative Communion Service have in mind. If we cannot move at a single stride up to the tremendous, perhaps the awful, idea of God that science reveals, we shall certainly not move back to the Missal and the Breviary. One can appreciate the criticism of the Prayer-Book for its repetitions, its rather mechanical use of the Scriptures, and its occasional drop, in some of the Collects, to the commonplace. If its noblest language is of the kind fit, as Mr. Shaw once said, to be read 'only in Church or on the eternal hills', it does miss the devotional privacy, the intense concentration of the spiritual powers, and the rich variety of appeal to them, at which the Roman Liturgy aims, and there is nothing in it to touch the ardour of the impassioned lovers to whom we owe the wonderful Mozarabic Ritual.[1] Here, indeed, one sees the Christian soul striving to rend the veil which conceals the mystery of Divine

[1] Take, for example, this Collect for Matins on the Monday in Holy Week:
'Arise, O Lord, not from sleep, not from place, not from time, O infinite and eternal Watch; that since many persecute, many harass, Thy little flock, Thou, our Redeemer and Defender, wouldst be present as our Hope in the storm, our Shelter in the heat, and tread under foot the fierceness and the evil councils of them that rise up against us, and scatter the collected thousands of them that surround us.'

Or this:

'Christ, the Son of God, Who, in the extremity of Thy Passion, hadst gall and vinegar given Thee to drink by the Jews, grant to us that, by this the bitterness which Thou didst taste for us, we may be made joyful by drinking of the river of Thy pleasures; to the end that both the bitterness of Thy death may increase the sweetness of our love, and the power of Thy resurrection may manifest to us in its perfect beauty the promised glory of Thy Face.'

(See Dr. Neale's *Essays on Liturgiology and Church History*.)

Love. But we are moderns, the veil has re-descended on us, and the attempt to penetrate it with such guides as the author of the Athanasian Creed makes in the end for dishonesty. This, in effect, is what the Revisionists are after. They are not content with Cranmer's magnificent work of editorship, which, while it bears clear witness to the past, has shaped our Prayer-Book into an indelible landmark of religious liberty. They would like to cut out the large and noble contributions which Luther and the Reformers, German and English, made to it, leaving an almost uninterrupted return track, maybe through the First Prayer-Book of Edward VI, to the mediæval formularies, and their metaphysical explanations and comments.

Here, then, the modern mind joins issue. It knows that, while nothing goes back, there is a long work of exploration to be done before we again attain one of those halting-places of the human spirit at which the Reformers arrived. In the meantime it seems an act of wisdom to keep the treasure they have handed down to us in the beautiful casket they designed. For to many the finest thing about the Prayer-Book is its tendency, *as a whole*, not to seek to express the inexpressible, not to lay down final positions, but rather – every avenue of thought having been explored, and every means of positive faith exhausted – still to leave free scope for new disclosures of the Infinite Knowledge and Compassion. Thus knowledge of God's Truth is daily prayed for as the Christian's highest good, but not as if it were already within his grasp, and 'Life Everlasting' as the crown of his life on earth, but not as his certain inheritance and possession. It is this reticence, this humility of tone and attitude, which, more than anything else, keeps the National Church in touch with the times. It is useless to say that it amounts to an abandonment of the Catholic position. For a Church which cannot explain herself to the intelligence of man, and take account of its growth, is not in the largest sense of the word a Catholic Church at all.

From the 'Spectator' of April 19, 1924.

NOTE

One cannot experience the imaginative beauty and delicacy of this essay without regretting that so much of H. W. M.'s

work was inevitably objective. Though a scribe, he always wrote as one having authority, but the authority herein revealed gains a richer music from mingling with the humble quests and communings of his own soul.—H.J.M.

PART SEVEN: IMPRESSIONS

MASSINGHAM AT THE *CHRONICLE*

AND

OTHER REMINISCENCES

BY

VAUGHAN NASH

MASSINGHAM AT THE *CHRONICLE*

AND

OTHER REMINISCENCES

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MASSINGHAM'S significance as a public man lies, I have always felt, in the fact that he was an artist wrestling with affairs. A play of emotion, a dramatic colouring, a note of passion ran through his treatment of affairs which to cooler minds demanded a drier light and a more balanced judgment. He was the advocate, not the judge. His choice of journalism rather than letters, or, to be accurate, journalism as a medium for letters, with all the stress and turmoil it entailed, was in fact imposed on him by his own nature. Too restless to sit down to book-writing for very long at a time, too deeply perturbed by the coil of human misery to devote himself to art and letters alone, the newspaper, as he fashioned it, gave him the medium he wanted. There he could raise the banner of his crusades and find scope for his craving for expression and his ardour for reform. Moreover he could assemble his own crew around him and taste with them the joy of the fight and breathe the pungent air of the newspaper office, in which the outsider perceives only strange smells, old dust and stuffiness, while to the journalist it bears the mixed and invigorating flavour of work-shop, ocean liner and studio.

One cannot think without a pang of the lost treasures of Massingham's art, daily devoured apace, and now, but for the handful of his later work within these covers, no more than fallen leaves blown about the world. But the journalist must look for his reward in the mark he sets upon his day and generation, and in Massingham's case there is no room for doubt either that he found and triumphed in his vocation or of his influence on the letters, the art and the affairs of his day.

The fascination he had for his colleagues (I am thinking now of the old *Chronicle* days, 1893 to 1899, and writing as an old *Chronicle* man) came in no small degree from the daily and nightly spectacle of the artist in action. It was a compound and irresistible attraction – an extraordinary man doing astonishing things in an unpredictable way. His output was torrential – news, reviews, leaders, anything. There was the organization of the paper, the thinking out and introduction of new features, the planning of campaigns, the selection and direction of staff. Journalism is a tough job indeed, and editing a great daily, intent on blazing new paths, was no light enterprise. And the nightly task when the news was gathered, of making it tell, of seeing that the whole paper was no inert sheet but a living, ringing thing, here came in the great conductor with his mastery of orchestral effects.

I must venture one flashlight shot of Massingham in the Editorial chair. Something has gone wrong with the night's scheme. (I find the supposition tempting because of the blast of white heat it conjures up.) The Editor's bell has been ringing continuously, and in the passages and the sub-editors' great room there is a sense of panic. Massingham, with his nerve rather shaken, glares at you through his glasses as you go into his room. His moods on this horrid night have been ranging from ice to white flame while he attacked the tangle and its perpetrators. Of course the whole trouble was due to the opaque X's obfuscated incapacity to understand or carry out the simplest, most direct instructions, or his silly notion – Heavens! if that was it, what fate would be too hot for him? – of improving on them. For X's sake and one's own it is best to bend before the blast, until things begin to resolve themselves, as in fact they do, the Editor presently proceeding to plough his way through the undergrowth of proofs and to toss and worry the flimsies of the night's big speech without a care but the clock. The chief sub-editor, entering the room with apprehension in his eye, sees at a glance that we are saved once more. And X, who thereupon appears, having, in fact, executed his mission precisely as instructed, is graciously received and forgiven. Of course it is not a typical night and the reader must not conclude that Massing-

ham with his agile darting pen was anything less than the miracle of deftness and resource which in truth he was. He had his moods, and he was not least lovable when he was laying about him and invoking his gods.

As political editor he was of course not to be ranged with confidence in any party fold. Those who hoped for his services as watchdog hoped in vain. His Liberalism and Radicalism were his own and not the party's, though he was always ready to help the party when he thought it deserved it, just as he was ready to make its life a burden if it went wrong. And yet it would be unjust to depict him as an incorrigible intransigeant. He would submit to mark time or assent to a compromise if needs must, and he would bear with feebleness and fumbling on the part of public men so long as he trusted them. Considering his restless nature and his haste to be getting on with the reforms that would not wait, he could not be said to be lacking in patience or in self-control. His work in the gallery – a fresh and brilliant contribution to the interpretation of Parliament – had given him a first-hand knowledge of the ways and personnel of both Houses; he had the capacity for swiftly envisaging new situations as they arose and of studying them deeply, as in the Venezuela case; and he possessed a serviceable knowledge of constitutional law which he often used with effect.

But his finest constructive work lay outside the ordinary course of politics. Such was the part he took first on the *Star* and later on the *Chronicle* in setting the London County Council on its feet and educating his readers up to its significance. His sustained appeal to London to govern itself in a fashion that became a noble city was extraordinarily rousing and he maintained it for years. His affection for the Council and his belief in its mission knew no bounds. At the election of, I think, 1895, when the Progressives were threatened by a powerful and reactionary combination, he turned the *Chronicle* into an electioneering broadsheet, wrote fiery leaders night after night, set the staff writing up every single activity that radiated from Spring Gardens, got artists to illustrate the articles – and was soundly beaten. Nor were there wanting kindly friends to trace the disaster to his too ardent advocacy. A few years later the

Conservatives, unnerved by the idea of an assertive and progressive London, set up the Borough Councils to serve the part of blockhouses against the Council, and Massingham had to fight hard in a vain attempt to save the city of his vision. Such defeats cut him to the heart, but he was never long in gathering himself for the next spring.

And on the Labour side, throughout the East Ends of English cities, in the factories, the fields and the mines, there was work to be done, dead though opinion in society and the Press might be. Compared with the social atmosphere we have gained to-day, those were asphyxiating times. He appeared on the scene at the decisive moment of the Dockers' strike, and the growth of the new Unionism (of the unskilled worker) to be followed a few years later by the miners' fight for a minimum wage. The first time I saw him was on a Sunday morning in August, 1889, when he came down to the Wade's Arms in Poplar from the *Star*, then incandescently on the Dockers' side, to see what was doing at the strike headquarters. I remember him as a pale, tired-looking, detached and rather stern figure, not specially responsive, as it seemed, to what his guides were telling him. Some of us who recall that strike know that it lit a candle that has not since been put out. That the forlorn and wretched dock and waterside labourers of that day should prevail against the principalities and powers and win their sixpence an hour was nothing less than a portent, and Massingham played his part in guarding and tending the flame till the time came, as it soon did, when it should burn brightly and shine afar. If there were space, one could say a word about the *Chronicle's* share in cheering on and steadying the new Unionism, supporting the miners in their grim, victorious struggle through the summer and autumn of 1893, pressing on factory and mining legislation, exposing the conditions in dangerous trades, and the living-in system that then prevailed in shops, and quelling Liberal opposition when Mr. Chamberlain set out on his great adventure of the Workman's Compensation Act. But the bare selection here enumerated must suffice.

Much has been said of Massingham's passionate search for heroes and leaders and of the summary methods he adopted when, having elevated them to power or fame, he found

he had no further use for them; but there is no mystery about his actions or his motives. He would devote himself to the last ounce to the leader whose face was set towards the promised land; for England had to be got out of the wilderness and leaders were necessary to that operation. But the support he gave lasted only so long as he conceived the leader to be trustworthy, and if he proved false the vendetta began. He might be misled in his choice of men or his estimate of movements, though not for long; but his code was clear – help generous and unstinted and promises of immortality to the statesmen who went forward, excommunication if they turned back, began tampering with the moral currency, or went after strange gods with Imperial names and tawdry shrines. Anxiously and vigilantly he would scan the prospect from his watch-tower. Did he make too little allowance for the exacting lives of Ministers and Oppositions, and the harassments of public men? Sometimes perhaps he did. But Massingham, let us remember, was a sincere and earnest man with an unerring ear for what rang false, and if his judgments were at times unduly harsh that was his way when his nerves were set on edge by anything that savoured of treachery, humbug, or cowardice.

It may seem tall talk to be discussing him as King-maker, but those who are old enough to remember the *Chronicle* as it was will understand. With its freshness, fervour and brilliance it 'flamed in the forehead of the morning sky'. Its appeal to the young and generous-hearted was compelling. Indeed it must have seemed to them the authentic organ of Germinal. It was a power in politics. And if proof be asked that Massingham was no vain, freakish, irresponsible, or self-seeking person, we have it in his instant resignation when word came that there was to be no more criticism of the Government while the Boer War lasted. To be dumb on such a question as this, which shook him to the depths, was not Massingham's idea of what the situation asked of him; and so in the autumn of 1899, he set forth, with the immediate members of his staff, turning his back on his beloved paper, in search of fields where his pen would be free.

It will fall to others to speak of his later activities, and I

must now set down a few memories and impressions of the man apart from his work. It is a figure of speech, because his work, with the thinking and reading that went to it, was his life, and you could never tell when it would summon him into brooding moods or when he would reappear from them. But if things were going happily and he felt for the moment care-free, no more radiant figure than he can be imagined. We spent some holidays together in Ireland and Normandy, at Biarritz and on various golf courses, but he was always happiest when there were children in the party and he could be a child to his heart's content and theirs. My children adored him, his impish ways, his trick of chanting incessantly absurd refrains and his strange delightful frolics, so that, whenever and wherever they encountered him, chaffing matches and hilarity broke out. One goes back particularly to our Irish holidays on the coast of Mayo and Connemara shortly before the war, where the juxtaposition of the scenery, the peasant people and the children would go to his head. There was one evening at Old Head, under Croagh Patrick, which I believe he reckoned amongst the best things in his life. After much rehearsing there took place a performance of *Everyman*. It started sedately enough, but undesigned effects of comedy induced suppressed laughter, and then laughter that nothing could suppress, till at last a torturing hysteria fell on actors and audience, only sparing the group of Irish domestics who sat quite unmoved and looked on at our folly with indulgent eyes.

His friendship for an unshaven, disreputable, blue-eyed man of Connemara, a most engaging rascal, became a family legend. Mikie's haunts were never discoverable when he was wanted for boating or fishing, but Massingham had secretly tracked him to his lair in a porter shop. When asked to account for his absences, M. declared that he had been sending off a telegram, and when this excuse wore thin, he pleaded that it was only 'a little half-telegram'. From this we presently arrived at the fact that he had formed the habit of drinking half-pints of porter in the shebeen as a means of communing with Mikie. Thenceforth a little half-telegram was what we offered him for years if he might be supposed to be thirsty.

A few more glimpses of him, sparks of light on some trait or facet of his personality, may be jotted down.

M. in bathing dress on the Old Head sands, towel in hand, chasing boy members of our party and shouting, 'Mi curse, mi bitter cur-r-se upon ye, bye' (Dickens with the right brogue): M. feeling faint at golf on being accompanied by a lady whose presence made his customary apostrophes inopportune. The early morning drink at the *Chronicle* when the paper had gone to press and M. could extend himself and make his peace with anyone he had flown at more than usually during the night: M. reading aloud the Sounding of the Trumpets passage from the *Pilgrim's Progress* to a week-end party on the Malvern Hills: Finding peace in picking green-fly off the roses in his garden at Mayertorne; and, at a party in the neighbourhood, capping a fashionable lady's babble of people with 'Ah! you should see our Susan' (a monstrous sow, a crony of his): Getting rid of an urgent article in the country or at home, indifferent to noises and movements, sunk in an easy chair, his pencil racing over the writing-pad: Planning holidays that came to nothing, a spring visit to Holland, which he loved, or a round of the more celestial Paris restaurants.

Seen from a distance he was apt to appear baffling and enigmatic. Friendly critics complained of violence, waywardness, perversity in his treatment of politics. It has already been suggested that his impact on affairs and the reaction upon him could hardly, in a man of so fine a sensibility, evoke the measured and sustained type of political guidance. But the projection into politics of this rare personality, if it produced no constant pillar of cloud by day or of fire by night, was disturbing, provocative, stimulating, illuminating, and now that it is withdrawn we can better estimate how much it counted for. It was a highly composite personality in which were blended paganism and austerity, mockery and seriousness, passionate ardour and a penetrating and unillusioned critical faculty, depths of generosity and tenderness and a strong infusion of corrosive scorn. Nor were these mere moods or phases such as, in their degree, the ruck of mankind are subject to, but tidal races, traceable it may be to the dancing blood of his French ancestry, the Puritanism of his parentage and

upbringing, and the play and interplay of the two strains. Yet, in his literary work how absolutely the diverse and seemingly jarring elements were subdued to his art, how perfectly attuned were all the strings, how completely banished all violence and agitation. His studies, even of the public figures which in his political pilgrimage he had dealt with so ruthlessly, were without malice or distortion. The light, firm touch of the master's hand never failed in this province of his kingdom.

Looking back through the thirty years, one feels how little changed he was by all the trials and adventures of his quest. At every stage one seems to see the same fragile figure with brooding brow and mocking eyes, threading his way with unshakable persistence through the windings and pitfalls of the confounding maze. Creeds and systems could give him no help and friends but little in times of stress and crisis. When these came he would retire into himself, often with 'Mark Rutherford's' autobiography in his hand, or another standby, Gogol's *Dead Souls* – his sacred books of stoicism and comedy. Till the end came, the flame of his spirit, we know, was unsubdued, his lifelong thirst for beauty unslaked, his impetuosity, though a shadow of its former self, uncowed, and the instrument of his consolation and delight, his lovely liquid style with its cadence, poise and rhythm remained unflawed and its flow urgent as in his youth.

VAUGHAN NASH

IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA

I

SOME AMERICAN CHARACTERISTICS

If a visitor to the United States would realize how little a great community changes its characteristics when once the main conditions of its life have been fixed, he will turn to his de Tocqueville, and find it all there. He may make a few remarks of his own on the grand map of American democracy. He will note where a new landmark has arisen, or an old one has disappeared. But in the main he will feel that the country is the same. Observer and idealist, a Liberal who could criticize his Liberalism, de Tocqueville was well suited to understand the United States and interpret them to the rest of mankind. He could penetrate the motives of men, marking the interaction of climate and circumstance, and divine the *whence* and the *whither* of their march. Thus, while he saw the last American in the first Puritan who landed on their shores, he also never lost sight of the nature of the soil itself. He adopted the American theory of the providential character of the founding of the great Republic. And he saw that Providence had wisely given it a big and a rich land to till.

NEW YORK

Holding close, therefore, to de Tocqueville, I asked myself what the United States looked like to a late and casual explorer like myself. Let me try and disentangle my thoughts. Landing in New York, I felt that it was all very big and very material. The noise was tremendous. New York's continual roar never ceased, like London's; it woke me early and chased me late to bed. Bells clanged; iron rails shrieked; taxis hooted; and on Broadway men were selling motor-cars at ten o'clock at night and drinking iced soda at twelve. The height of the buildings made the city seem a habitation of giants. As I gazed up at the sky-scrapers – twenty, thirty, forty storeys high – I seemed a petty Gulliver crouching in the corn-stalks of Brobdingnag. The movement seemed intense; uncanny;

never had I realized so fierce a drive of nervous energy. Yes; New York was richer and more splendid than any city I had ever seen. But its activities were not so varied. In London or in Paris there were many things to do; in New York there appeared to be only one. People here must live to buy and sell, not to loiter or think; certainly not to pray. Those who walked, walked with a serious, preoccupied air. But an enormous number were driving automobiles. The motion was incessant, and much better organized than our own. The life of the people was obviously cramped by the necessities imposed on the city's builders. But it was laid out on a simple, rectangular plan, presently expanding through broad smooth thoroughfares into wide spaces of park or woodland.

THE GREAT MART

Such a society did not seem to be in need of stimulation. Nevertheless, the stimulation of eye, ear, and inward sense, was incessant. The very goods had tongues. 'Buy me; sell me; find out how and where to buy and sell me, and be efficient at buying and selling me.' The chief, though not the only expositors of this science of advertisement were obviously the newspapers. 'Turn ideas into dollars', said one of these monitors. 'Opportunity adlets', was the title of another. This was the literary appeal of theatres, cinemas, and the ten-cent magazines, whose form, title-page (invariably a picture of a handsome young woman) and 'make-up' were all alike. The abundant fiction affected to deal with love and adventure. Its true subject was success. Heroes were men who made money or lost it; heroines were women who helped heroes to make money or lose it. Villains tampered with the mechanism of wealth – cheques, stocks, and their prices, cablegrams, dictaphones, telephones, or safes – and made it go temporarily wrong.

ITS BEAUTY

I turned from the news-stands to the streets. The new passion for street architecture has not yet transformed New York; but it has pushed squalor out of the centre, and given

its merchant princes habitations fit for kings. Here the shops were palaces, the greater business houses cathedrals, the greater railway stations temples, such as Pæstum never knew. This was a street of Genoa; that a corner of Florence. One quarter, still incomplete, seemed all marble; not one mean building met the eye; storey rose on storey, with slight but exquisite relief of ornament. The interiors of these mansions of exchange were of an extreme richness; the *foyers* glittered with gold and mosaic, and were cased from floor to ceiling in many-coloured, jewel-like stonework. All the great classic styles of architecture seemed brought into fitting service, from Egyptian mass and solemnity to the fancifulness of later Gothic and the decorative refinement of the Renaissance. The glories of Mr. Cass Gilbert's masterpiece, the Woolworth Building, require an epic to themselves. Its founder was Mr. Frank Woolworth, who, having failed and risen again, as so many Americans do, made a great fortune out of his 1,000 or so stores, scattered over the Continent and selling goods marked at five or ten cents, and crowned it with this mighty fane. Firm rooted in the rock of Manhattan the Woolworth Building soars, in a series of receding towers, to fifty-eight storeys, carried through nearly 800 feet of stonework. It houses 12,000 regular tenants, and entertains as many as 30,000 passing Mammonites a day. Its 5,000 windows sparkle with light, so that the mass has the look of an Aladdin's palace, magically quarried from some valley of diamonds and precious stones. Two-thirds of the way up, its designer has thrown in a kind of Gothic cathedral, which hangs high in air, like a predella of the vast design. Babylon and Thebes never dreamed in such immensity. 'Here,' says America, 'have I set up my monument, the symbol of my life and my religion. I have made Big Business beautiful.'

Was it fanciful to think that the pulpit preached much the same gospel as McKim and Cass Gilbert? American divines, said de Tocqueville, turn readily to earth. So it seemed. Most of the subjects chosen and advertised in the Press were political and topical, few suggested speculation or a directly devotional subject. 'The love of well-being is now become the predominant taste of the nation.' Confirming the verdict

of the great French observer, Mr. Herbert Croly adds the reflection that 'the American system stands for the highest type of an excellent worldly life that mankind has yet ventured.' By that test it stands, and seems content to be judged.

ITS WEALTH

The mass-wealth of America appeared to flow from an unfailing horn of abundance. The universal incitements to spend – for clearly the seller's will, brought to the highest point of skill, dominated the buyer's – seemed to issue from sheer superfluity of production. The variety of goods was immense, the quality good, though falling short of our very finest workmanship. It was making in the mass and for the mass. Sufficiency had brought with it refinement. The women clerks and attendants in stores and post-offices dressed quite as elegantly as their patrons; clearly their standard of personal delicacy was high. Abundance also led to frivolousness of taste. The brilliantly-lighted stores, with their interminable rows of counters, were packed with luxuries and unnecessities. Yet goodness was by no means neglected; the best filled book-counters I have ever seen stood in Mr. Wanamaker's resplendent palace-store in Philadelphia. I have spoken of the use of automobiles. For all his mental restlessness, the town American does not walk when he can help it; indoors he uses 'elevators' and 'escalators'; and for the streets, cars, subways, the dreadful device of overhead railroads – and automobiles. When Mr. Ford has done his perfect work in rural America, every farmer may have his automobile, also his tractor and truck. When this wonderful productive power has been equalized and moralized, America should be the first country in the world to own not only vast territory, but a great surface of suffused well-being.

ITS MEANING

Thus one began to find a key to the genius of American industry. America excelled above everything in standardization. According to Mr. Wells, we English enjoyed the first

3 per cent. of excellence. Then came the American contribution of 60 per cent. of middle excellence. It was for this average, to the neglect of the super-refined, that America catered. She did, indeed, appear to show some curiosity about the finer baubles of our civilization, draining it of Rembrandts and First Folios of Shakespeare and storing them in pretty jewel-boxes like the Morgan library. But its needs were not the first or the conscious object of her civilization. Her governing democracy left out both extremes, the small top layer of fastidious living and the broad lower levels of poverty. She was impatient with the latter because it was not American enough. She ignored the former, for her democracy was founded and grew up without and in spite of it.

AMERICAN IDEALISM

If, this, then, was the clue; it was possible to see American materialism in a different light. America was essentially idealist after all. She was eliminating coarse labour. Meaner forms of personal attendance were being rapidly abolished, the 'house servant' was going to be an assistant, not a menial; already the idea of an eight-hours' day for domestic service was taking hold, and was sure to grow. Soon most of the daily scouring of the human midden would be done by machinery. Also she was steadily aiming at a large general good, enforced by a general will, and this conception she would continually extend. Masses would always be added to the original block; they would come under the rule of standardized comfort. Indeed, they were being leavened, not perhaps by a deliberate and sympathetic culture, so much as by her natural force of assimilation. Everything and everybody moved up, little by little. Thus the children of Italian and Hungarian immigrants soon forgot their native tongues, began to speak English, and in this land of opportunities were just beginning to appear among the million-dollar class. The negroes were getting richer; in New York they had taken to occupying good, even half-fashionable quarters. A society which started with a theoretic acceptance of equality would in time come to realize it.

SOME DIFFICULTIES

But here a new difficulty presented itself. What if, in fact, American society could never reach this ideal of diffused comfort because the old American uniformity – the basis of unity – was no longer there? There were the negroes, not assimilable because (quite frankly), white society would not have them at any price. There were the East European immigrants, already beginning to overshadow and outgrow the German and Irish population, the people who built the rail-tracks, raised the sky-scrapers, and dug the coal and iron, and yet were not '100 per cent. American', or anything like it. And there was the growing tendency of the Anglo-Saxon Americans, *the* America, to become superintendents of labour, and to leave the hewing and drawing to the new arrivals. Within limits the true American is the most adaptable of men. He moves here and there, from politics to business, from business to a profession, from one calling to another. Thus Mr. Penrose, the great Republican 'boss,' who learned his business as a youth by studying the ways of ward politics, was a Harvard graduate. Mr. McAdoo, who made a great name in administration, left politics, and became standing counsel for the mighty business of the 'movies'. But outside agriculture, rough manual toil is less and less in the life contract of the American race. Her public men begin to favour a period of exclusiveness. But if she is still bent on running the race of civilization at top speed, for how long will she consent to shut out the people without whose aid her arms would never have stretched in full strength from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast?

II

American civilization, seen in such a capital of pleasure as New York, looks luxurious, but the American mind, objective and material as it is, does not run, as de Tocqueville feared it might, mainly to 'physical gratifications'. One of its finest and most benevolent types – I mean President Eliot of Harvard – thinks that over-eating is an American failing, and indeed there is a rather childish general consumption of

'candy'. But to an Englishman the occasional sight of a gross physical type rather emphasizes the fine-drawn physique of the average American, especially of American women. Hospitality is a specially American virtue, carried to a degree unknown and inconceivable in England. But even in the rich American's house, the social dinner is a simpler, more frugal meal than with us, and alcohol is seldom offered at it. But the impetuous haste with which an 'anti-moral' social force (as the saloon is conceived to be) is shovelled out of the nation's path, shows the old Puritan spirit alive not only in its New England home, but in the Middle West – the later nursery of the Prohibitionist movement. The American seems to live more on his nerves than on the more primitive passions. The decline in the birth-rate of the home stock is a hint that he lives on them to excess.

PUBLIC SPIRIT

Yet the American's love of fine buildings testifies to a sensuous artistic quality, which, like his addiction to street parades (nearly every American seems to keep a uniform somewhere at home and to be able to play the fife badly) is also an expression of his public spirit. The idea of the nation, of being part of it, showing that you are part of it, exhibiting, almost worshipping its symbols, publicly praising it, celebrating its great men and occasions, passes more and more into a commemorative ritual. The flag is everywhere, in the hands of the living, on the graves of the dead, and woe to him who fails to honour its ceremonial passage. The American cemeteries are the most beautiful I have ever seen; but Arlington, where thousands of Federal and Confederate soldiers sleep their last sleep together, their graves looking down on the many-pillared dome of the Capitol, is surely the most beautiful of them all. The cult of the dead, neglected by us, is in the States part of the continual reference to the past. The land is full of physical memorials of the founders of the Republic, and the soldiers of its two great wars. At Valley Forge and elsewhere, old guns still stand in the embrasures of Washington's fortifications, and the plan of his lines is carefully pre-

served and traced out for the benefit of ages to come. It is this form of ancestor-worship – the cult of the old families and their pedigrees – which seems to me to give one key to the conservatism of American politics. The great Confederation will never take our shape; never forget the rock out of which it was hewn. Self-centred, and rightly as well as wrongly self-satisfied, the ground-plan of the American State is always kept before the eyes of the coming generations. It is possible that a great economic revolution might change all this. But it is hard to believe that America will ever lose her bump of veneration. In the States it is not permitted to lay hands on your father, Parmenides. A professor, examining the dealings in war-stock of some of the early Republicans, was soon made sensible of grave error.

GOVERNMENT BY PUBLIC OPINION

For it is public opinion which, as you soon discover, is the real governor of America; public opinion enforced by the Press. When it moves, it moves irresistibly. When America declared war, the war-feeling, sweeping from the East to the Centre, and from the Centre to the Pacific Slope, wiped out not only the pacifism of the States, but also toleration for the mood through which the nation had so recently passed. The dissent of a critical minority was negligible; among the 104,000,000 in the States, not a quarter of a million are even enrolled in sects conscientiously objecting to war. But the great mass movement must go forward as if the whole people were in it.

THE ORGANIZATION OF FEELING

This organization of feeling is universal; it extends to America's pleasures no less than to her politics. At the baseball match, the cheering of the crowd must be massed cheering, led by leaders with gramophones, themselves carefully trained to the work of direction. The players themselves are continually directed, encouraged, warned, as to the tactics of the game, and the spirit in which they should play it. At the Harvard

and Princeton match I heard no spontaneous cheering. Both sets of undergraduates answered to the orchestral voice and hand of the cheer leaders, and stopped dead when they desisted. Authority is thus able to get a quick response to its will whenever it makes its appeal to the American's willingness to fall into line. Equality he both understands and practises. Jack is as good as his master, and there is no country which has so completely banished the slave spirit in speech and intercourse. Give no peremptory order in store or hotel or street car; it will either be promptly resented or not attended to. But liberty is a different matter. A uniform seems to strike this people dumb; a mere Briton is astonished at the deference it wins. Nor is independence of the main stream really welcomed. America likes her mental food to be averaged and standardized. Thus change in the policy of a newspaper, or even a new inflection of its normal attitude, is quickly noted, and may be sharply resented. A well-known journal is said to have lost 30,000 subscribers on account of one leading article which slightly modified, without really changing, its presentment of one aspect of the national case in the war. And the more marked dissenters from it have suffered in person and estate far more acutely than with us.

THE GENIUS FOR ASSOCIATION

America does, however, possess a natural corrective to her respect for authority – the authority that dresses itself in the garb of the average man. This is her genius for 'association'. 'In every case,' says de Tocqueville, 'where at the head of a great enterprise you see in France the Government and in England an aristocrat, be sure that in the United States you will see an association.' And again, 'the moment the people of the United States have conceived a feeling or an idea that they wish to propagate in the world, they seek each other, and when they have found each other, they unite'. The 'wealth of American group-life', as Mr. Harold Laski calls it, or 'neighbourhood organization', in Miss Follett's phrase,[1] is astonishing; it covers, no doubt, a good deal of fussiness;

[1] *The New State.*

but its idea of a 'creative' citizenship, its desire to change American politics from a machine to a living thing, is neither a dream nor a fad. From this working of the social conscience spring the Settlement Houses, who take the foreign immigrant by the hand, and try to work some leaven of thought and care into that mass of dumped humanity; the School Centres, which believe in 'vitalizing' the 'group' of young people – giving them bands and orchestras and team-games and some training in 'Civics'; the 'Unit', which flourishes in Cincinnati, and campaigns against 'poverty, disease and preventable death', the idea of moving from the School Centre to the Community Centre, meeting in the municipal buildings of the parks and controlled by local boards of neighbours; the Recreation Centres and Neighbourhood Associations of New York; the Neighbourhood Commission of Manhattan, which talks to the city government on sewerage, baths, and pavements. The whole movement is individualist; it tries to split up the merely 'influenced' crowd, and help it to find itself in the self-working 'group'. Behind these neighbourly activities Miss Follett sees an effort to give a large and fresh content to Democracy. Democracy, she thinks, will never be maintained, it cannot even begin to exist, until the old formal, intermittent political action is supplemented by the habit of people acting together in small groups of city or township dwellers, and being alive to what citizenship really means for them. Dropping votes into ballot-boxes, or having a great athletic political fight every four years, is not enough; rather it is a thin cheat of Democracy.

CHILD LABOUR

One applauds this effort; and yet wishes that this splendid American energy would get concentrated on itself, and be critical as well as spirited. It is excellent for the Cincinnati 'unit' to organize its health work among mothers that are and are to be, and for Mr. Bok, of the famous *Ladies' Home Journal*, and his 'pre-natal editor', to have arranged the successful arrival of 30,000 new American citizens on the stage, all doing extremely well. But admirers of the States would like

to see their State-conscience getting a firm grip of the business of exploiting some thousands of other little citizens that have arrived already, and seemed to my untutored eyes to be doing extremely ill. American citizenship delights to add charming departments for children to its splendid libraries; but it has only begun to take the problem of child-labour firmly in hand. Nothing shocks one more in a night stroll through a great American city than to watch the child-worker on his late round of vagrant toil. Mr. Wells, who was also shocked, insists that terrible physical ills attend this unseemly blot on American industry. I cannot doubt it; or that when America wills she can wipe it out for ever.

III

THE TRIUMPH OF PROHIBITION

If America's street architecture may be deemed a joyous commentary on her civilization, the prohibitionist movement is beyond all doubt to be regarded as a stern corrective to its decay. It may be called premature, Utopian in its method, oppressive in its manner. But it seemed to me a clear example of the working of the American race-consciousness. Let no one doubt the long and serious preparation which led up to the constitutional amendment of December 18, 1917, and to its ratification by forty-five States in the Union out of forty-eight. It is technically true to say that the Act is a purely representative one, and that the people have given it no 'plébiscitary' sanction. But the plea has little substantial worth. Over fifty years of agitation lie behind a decision which has broken up the fading lines of contention between Democrats and Republicans and taken from both parties a majority of more than two to one in favour of Prohibition. Still less is it true to say that the victory was stolen behind the bodies of the soldiers; before the War began over 60 per cent. of Americans were living under 'dry' law. On this issue, as a shrewd party leader, unfavourable to Prohibition, said to me, American politics have been 'de-dramatized'. An appeal was made, not to the old personal or party loyalties, but to the public spirit of the people. The hostile forces in Congress were worn down

by having exhibited to them a moving picture of the march of Prohibition and of the great material benefits that had accompanied it. The campaigners seized the American conscience of a great social evil, and then brilliantly advertised the cure. 'Three things made Prohibition – Puritanism, Westernism, and Efficiency', said a close, critical observer of the fight. But the fighters were not mere fanatics, and the foe was no phantom. Not one of the public men I interrogated had a good word for the saloon. It was impressed on me that the bad odour in which it stood forbade the sensible compromise of retaining the lighter beers. 'We cannot trust it', was the answer. 'The saloon must go. It corrupts our politics, enfeebles our stock, and stains our womanhood.'

THE ANTI-SALOON MOVEMENT

To the casual visitor, the American saloon, with its male attendants, well-clothed and well-trained, has an air of almost dull sobriety in comparison with the riot of our public-house. But there is abundant witness to its ravage. The society of the small town, notably of the coastal population of New England, was pictured to me as seriously demoralized by drink. The national yearly consumption of alcohol per head – 22·19 gallons of all liquors and wines in 1907, with a fall in 1916, under partial prohibition, to 16·40 – was extremely high. In face of such figures, medical, official, and industrial opinion gradually hardened in hostility. The United States census of 1910 put 10 per cent. of the insanity down to alcohol. Nearly all the railways began to discriminate against drinkers; great employers, such as Rockefeller and Ford, weeded them out of their shops and factories whenever they could be traced. The nation, in fact, was growing teetotal under a hundred influences. I prophesy that when the American soldier tells his full story of the prolonged liquor carnival of London, they will be more potent still. No American statesman, prohibitionist or anti-prohibitionist, dared have given 'the trade' such a permit as the British Government presented it with this month;[1] he would have been out of office in a week and

[1] *July*, 1919.

a back number in politics for the rest of his career. Many American publicists distinguish between temperance and prohibition. But produce your proof of a slide to race-degeneracy, and they will treat the drink question as the Anti-Saloon League treats it. The Bishop of Hereford sneers at the intellectual quality of the war on alcohol. I should have said that it had enlisted most of the best minds in America.

NO COMPENSATION

Just because the conviction has been so deep and fervid, the remedy, working in the quick American soil, has been so drastic, so crude if you will. The demand for compensation was treated much in the spirit of Emerson, when he thundered against compensating the slaveowner. It was hardly considered. In spite of her individualism, America is not so firmly anchored as we are to the idea of the immanent and eternal rights of property. The trade would get a few months' law – time to put its house in order – and that was consideration enough. The mobility of American business – the ease with which a man transfers his energy and his plant from one kind of trading to another – did the rest. The dealer in 'hard drinks' must turn his mind to the selling of 'soft' ones. And he did. It seems certain that America will rise from her job of stamping on the liquor trade unweighted with a serious problem of unemployment.

THE SUCCESS OF PROHIBITION

The proof that a nation of one hundred million people can do without alcohol is not, I think, complete. Human nature is not finally exhibited in a few months or years of contagious enthusiasm. It is clear that partial prohibition has not stopped drinking. Most of the local reports I have seen admit a continuing percentage of the old returns of drunkenness and alcoholism, and the familiar story of State legislation in America affirms that conclusion. That was inevitable. A 'dry' town could always slyly resort to its 'wet' neighbour, as Washington to Baltimore. But there is no gainsaying the harvest of material

good that the reformers gathered from their first reaping. The moment a town or a county or a State went dry, the Anti-Saloon League began to feel its pulse and report its abounding social health. Bank deposits, the purchase of food, dry goods, children's needs, all bounded up. The hotels boomed with the rest. Jails began to empty, and new schools to open. A friend of the 'wets' summed up their losing case as follows: 'The saloon is gone for ever, there can be no argument for its return, the only humiliating thing is that the fools and fanatics and cranks were right, and we were wrong.'

AFTER THE BATTLE

Thus far moral enthusiasm, marching to one of the greatest triumphs in its history. Its advance is stained, say its enemies, and many perfectly fair critics, with intolerance, and is a blow at human nature. Obviously it is a check, a bit in the mouth of the average easy-going man. Starting with no conviction of the essential rationality of Prohibition, I found myself attracted to its benevolence, as well as startled by the great surface of refined thinking and living which the movement had captured in its swift but by no means erratic course. Its weakness is discernible; though the workman's view is by no means to be gauged by the protest of the Federation of Labour, one does not feel sure that Labour, as a whole, is really acquiescent. The workman is not a Puritan, and when he happens to be of European origin, he has the beer-drinking or the wine-drinking habit, usually in moderation. If henceforth he must walk through life dreamless and open-eyed, unsolaced by his favourite spell-binder, some new door of hope and imagination must open to him, or there will be a cry of injury and revolt. Middle-class morality, the prudent code of physical self-denial in exchange for worldly success, the dollars of the great capitalist, and the pressure of the great employers, have mingled with race pride and refinement, and the ardour of an impulsive asceticism. The human animal, driven too fast, has shy corners to retreat to, queer solaces for the loss of forbidden appetites. A recent observer of Prohibition in Canada found evidence, which he retailed to me, of

much resort to secret drinking and to vile and even murderous substitutes for beer and whisky. He and others thought Prohibition inapplicable to the greater American cities, and prophesied evasion. When the officials found the law was being dodged on a sufficiently wide scale, they would cease to try and enforce it.

REACTION?

But he and they frankly gave up the smaller towns and the farmers. They would stay Prohibitionists; for them the reign of alcohol was over. But that looks like a final conquest. Prohibition has enlisted science, business, religion, and that typical American compound, business-religion, the teacher, the doctor, the enthusiast. To their call answers a new veteran army of social workers which has fought and put its enemy to flight in all but three American States. Whatever happens to a wavering East, the conquest of the West and the South (the latter based on the determination to keep whisky and the negro apart) makes a return to liquor almost impossible. A three-fourths majority of States is needed for undoing the constitutional amendment. Where is it to be found? Nor can I conceive a serious moral reaction arriving unless the spiritual stuff of America undergoes a change which would resemble a deterioration. Later America seems led by the smaller urban unit; the force of political evangelism derives from there. And her climate – or a good deal of it – appears to frown on alcohol. Even the stranger, after a few weeks' sojourn, finds his palate turning from its solace and satisfied with iced-water, and some variety or other of the scores of pleasant confections of the candy-store or the druggist's counter. The storing and connoisseurship of wine are not reckoned among the polite arts of American society, and wine and spirits have long ceased to figure conspicuously on the table of the hotel dining-room. America is not a leisured people to anything like the extent that we are. Incomparably the greatest of the 'business' nations, she makes also a continuous preparation for being greater still. She is 'all in' for the race; we are not. She may change; waver; soften; broaden; deepen. But she will not

coarsen. Her people will reach after the personal refinement which is their pride, and her new builders will continually take on new gradations of shape and colour from their Puritan model.

IV

There is every reason to hope that when America makes up her account with the War, she will reserve an item for which she means to come to a settlement with herself. She is not and cannot be satisfied with her treatment of Liberty. The protest of her President, the tone of her Liberal Press, the growing body of legal criticism of the trials under the Espionage Act, are evidence of her discontent. Is it surprising? For it was in the great Republic of the West, not among the degenerates of Europe, that freedom of Press and public meeting, of speech and even of thought, was most completely abrogated during the War. On her provision for the religious objector America's conscience is rather clearer than ours. But she far out-did us in pressure, legal and extra-legal, to produce not merely a mass-opinion, but a rigid line-up of all her racial and social groups behind the armies of the Republic. Her legalists wove perhaps the widest net that was ever wrought to catch 'sedition' in. Her public opinion produced the political judge and the private inquisitor. And her mob law enlisted the masked band and waged the masked war on labour.

Something indeed must be allowed for America's intense preoccupation with an enterprise in which half the world saw her as the final liberating element. We speak of the power of nationality. America strikes one as *the* self-conscious nation. She has no ceremonial centre, no crown or kinghood to answer to. She has simply herself. And to her magnified and even morbid sensibility, a merely disrespectful attitude to the public policy, to say nothing of a hostile or an obstructive one, became an act of *lèse majesté*. The widely-drawn Espionage Act treated light or scornful speech of the Government of the United States as a criminal act.[1] The ægis was

[1] So did the eccentric report of the Overman Committee of the Senate, whose rhetoric swept up in a common flood Bolshevists, pro-Germans, and the directors of the anti-prohibitionist campaign, as well as those who 'retarded' the

flung over America's allies, as well as on the breast of the Motherland herself. The decision in 'The United States *v.* *The Spirit of* '76' ordered the seizure of films depicting the Indian Raids of the Revolutionary War. Even thought had to be patriotically correct. A German-American was thrown into jail for admitting, *on a private inquisition at his house*, that he had not subscribed to a Liberty Loan because he did not wish either side to win. Half the attack was on mental dissent. A Roman priest was fined for refusing to ring his church bells to celebrate an American victory, and an alien was given six months for 'disorderly conduct' in refusing to buy Liberty Bonds. Even the loose indictments of inadequacy of zeal in the World War were not enough; for convictions were generally obtained on prisoners' records of speech or writing. A tendency to injure the State was discovered in anything which might discourage the soldier, by intention or indirect effect – such as a discussion of profiteering.[1] The full backwash of this tremendous coercive effort is still to be seen. Its immediate political result was to illiberalize the whole thought of America about the War. A free field for the President's aims in the War became impossible when, as Mr. Chaffee concludes, 'the opponents of his idealism ranged unchecked, while the men who urged greater idealism went to prison'.

But there is worse to chronicle. For the law did not act alone. It was adulterated with the class-war, and distorted and inflamed with popular violence. The evidence on both these counts is too grave to be lightly regarded. Hangings, tarrings, and featherings (some of innocent pro-war citizens), the forced deportation by 'Loyalty Leaguers' of 1,000 miners of Arizona, members of the I.W.W., kidnappings, and mock hearings before mob tribunals, duckings, forced kissings of the flag, abounded. These acts stained America's enthusiasm for the War.

But they also fixed it in close, if unnatural, kinship with

Americanization of the alien, and 'discouraged' his assimilation with the American people.

[1] See *Freedom of Speech in Wartime*. By Zechariah Chaffee, Jr. (Harvard Law School.)

another war, the war on organized labour. The American Federation of Labour, which promoted most of the war-strikes, was let alone. But the I.W.W., the union of the 'woman-less, voteless, and workless', was set upon by law and mob law, and between them was almost wiped out. Probably this rude citizenship of the landless and the roving was not keen about the War. But it was undeniably sharp-set about Capitalism. 'We have taken advantage of the general prejudice against them as an unpatriotic organization,' said a lumber operator in Washington, 'to beat their strike.' And at the Chicago trial, the I.W.W.'s doctrine of the class-war and the abolition of the wage-system was easily made to wear the mask of treason to the American State. The 166 defendants, in addition to interfering with certain war-laws, had been engaged in a 'scheme and artifice' to 'defraud' employers. The 'artifice', said the indictment, consisted in 'sabotage' by propaganda in the mails. In other words, the I.W.W., in addition to being an indirect inconvenience to the prosecution of the War (the indictment hardly alleged more than that), was, and always had been, a standing inconvenience to the Capitalist system. True, it had always advocated sabotage without ever having been prosecuted for it; its members had hardly struck at all during the War, and it was not charged with pro-Germanism or with direct and malicious obstruction of the campaign. But there it was – a piece of noxious revolutionary sentiment, free-spoken and nasty about capital, and anyhow embedded in the stiff conglomerate of the national will, and critical of or sullenly indifferent to it.

Is it, therefore, surprising that when the American Radical recalls the attack on the I.W.W., the similar campaign against the Non-Partisan League – the union of the farmers of North Dakota – the sentence of twenty years on Mr. Berger, the only Socialist member of Congress, for an ordinary Socialist criticism of the War, and of ten years on Mrs. Stokes for connecting war with profiteering, he declares, in bitterness of soul, that the 'battle of American Liberalism has not even begun'? Why this intolerance? De Tocqueville thought it endemic in the American soil and character. But there is a cause of essentially modern growth. With all the power of the

middle-mass of America, and beneath its sublime confidence that the toughest problem will yield to the magic touch of American idealism, there exists an undertow of scepticism and even of fear. Americans know that they have not yet created one America. They want to do it; indeed, they want to do it quick. They are alarmed – as we should be alarmed—when they read that fourteen languages were spoken among the strikers in the textile works at Lowell, Massachusetts. But they have not yet realized that the trouble of the non-assimilated immigrant calls for 'creative, synthetic, and merging ideas',[1] not for individual and expulsive ones.

For with far more genius for organization, her Capitalist class seems to me to show rather less constructive and conciliatory power than our own: America is still far from the thought of co-operative industry. Our National Industrial Conference surprises nearly all her politicians by its boldness. Many of her Labour leaders think the idea of a political Labour Party merely wild. The attitude indeed is receptive enough. The Labour Party's National programme had a quite astonishing vogue, not only as a charter of industrialism but as a creative social document. Nearly every American Church, including the Catholics, debated its manifesto, and adopted and advertised some special variety of its message. Again, the American capitalist seems not indisposed to the workshop committee, unless, like Mr. Ford, he prefers a liberal but exacting and inquisitive paternalism.[2] But then, as often as not, he may exclude or ignore the trade union, or boggle at the very idea of its recognition. As for the immigrant – well, he must be swept in and kneaded up. He has only to look American and be American, to step out of the vanishing glow of Europe, and quit her outworn garb of speech and song and custom. If he prefers to step back again, with some of the bitterness of disillusion in his soul, that is his fault and affair. The negro (America's second great 'problem' of assimilation), is a different case. Dr. DuBois thinks that so rapid is his advance in wealth and refinement that an eventual rise in status is by no means

[1] Mr. Wells: *The Future of America*.

[2] Including, it would appear, the investigation of the workers' morals and bank-balances.

to be despaired of, and that the advent of the suffrage for black and white womanhood will be a long step towards it. But there America must decide. A solid wall of race antagonism still stands in the path of full negro emancipation. Here and there a little gives. But the physical segregation of the negro remains. So does the closed ballot-box and (in the South) the Jim Crow car.

*

And yet who will set bounds to American improvement? No one can view the American at home, and see how the best character is nurtured there into high thought and vigorous effort for the perfection of the common life, without becoming conscious of a strain of fineness and delicacy, of faith and energy of humanity, which is lacking to our own. Sometimes I do not think that we can grow men like Mr. Hoover, Col. House, Mr. Bullitt, and some of the younger publicists and officials with whom I have come in contact, or at least that we grow them in insufficient numbers. The best American seems more in love with life than our man of culture. Even the American money-maker is not so unimaginatively and selfishly restful about money as is our own leisured class. Money is made with enormous zest; but less for the sake of keeping things, than of continually making and re-making them. And self-criticism grows. Young America has done with the shallow optimism of Press and platform. It sees America as she is, not as she likes to be talked to. Of race-pride and affectionateness, it has at bottom a sufficiency. But it views America's power in the light of America's unpreparedness. Both are colossal; and yet the stranger in sympathetic and admiring mood, or in critical and doubtful one, is continually drawn to the conclusion that America is intensely worth having for herself and for the human race, and that no other existing society is so important to it.

From the 'Nation' of July 12, 19 *and* 26, *and August* 30, 1919.

NOTE

I have omitted nothing from these Impressions except two sentences of information now out of date, and some statistics on the subject of Prohibition no longer relevant.

From a private letter: 'This is Boston or a pretty suburb of it arranged in green woodland. And we addressed a short meeting of Bawston ladies handing them out gobbets of high-mindedness. And I'm rather glad to be out of New York where I talked and was talked and telephoned to more than ever before in my life: where it is smash-clatter-whoof-bang all the day and all the night, and where you may see the most beautiful buildings and the most ridiculously pretty shops, and the greatest lot of automobiles, and the most fearful hurry, and the shallowest talk, and the nicest folk in the world. Ten days of it sent me packing off to Bawston: and peace.

'I can't yet order my impressions: they are so distractingly multiform. America is just masses of people, probably able to do anything they set their hands to, but as yet simply "striking it rich". I like them: they're hospitality, curiosity, openness itself. And they're the greatest builders in the world, and will make a grand young Babylonian Empire before they've done with it.

'The psychology here is everything. No wonder there's such a (word illegible) of it. A far greater surface play of character than with us: and of course distractingly many-sided, and deflected by a thousand circumstances of race, colour, etc. I feel in a whirl, but an interesting whirl. And presently I suppose one can think again.'

Perhaps a juster title would have been, 'First Impressions of America'. I doubt whether 'Second Impressions', had they ever materialized, would have surf-ridden American energy quite so buoyantly, or failed to turn a look towards our own less billowed but more richly, deeply tinted waters, a look more tender and nostalgic than is apparent in the last paragraph. I confess to thinking it a little superficial, and if modern industrial America is an expression of 'love of life', to being 'half in love with easeful death'.—H.J.M.

LEAVING THE NEST

It is, I suppose, impossible to uncoil the events of one's youth in anything like the sequence in which they occurred and in the degree of their importance. Some of the records are gone for ever; others are merely a blur; while of those which have bitten sharply into the memory many seem as trivial as yesterday's *Daily Mail*. For example, I remember my first love and my first cigar (both had a tragic sequel); but I could not for the life of me recall the process by which I learned (and forgot) shorthand, or became enamoured of English poetry. But, on the whole, the days I spent in the office of the *Daily Press* stand out very clearly from my boyish recollections. Not that we thought very much of the *Daily Press*. In those early and leisured days the physical universe seemed to revolve exclusively round the *Norfolk News*, while the moral world, much upset by the Church of England and the *Norfolk Chronicle*, only recovered its balance on the appearance of Mr. Tillett's leading article there. The *Daily Press* was all right in its way. But it was rather frivolous and Laodicean.

I came to the *Daily Press* a boy of seventeen, fresh from the Grammar School, a great hand at Latin hexameters and Greek iambics, and with about as much knowledge of nineteenth-century England and Norwich as if I had been brought up in Babylon. Being a strict Nonconformist, I acquired an instant taste for tobacco, Socialism, the theatre, and the Roman Catholic ritual and every heretical book I could lay my hands on. I was an idle apprentice. My chief duty was a weekly pilgrimage to Carrow Abbey, where Mr. Tillett, my guardian and idol, dictated his leader to me, and I transferred its wisdom to the compositors in a script which for thirty years has earned me their undying hatred. It was an extremely jolly life, redeemed intellectually for me by the love and admiration I formed for my old friend, Mr. Spilling, who tried to make me a Swedenborgian, and did, in fact, convince me that it was possible to be both an editor and a saint. The miracle stands, in my later experience, on that single example, but since then I have never given it up as impossible.

I did, I know, a certain amount of reporting, beginning with the police-court, whose procedure inspired me with a loathing I have never lost. I have a very faint remembrance of my first leading article, but I shall never forget my first sight of a prisoner in the dock. I could not bear the vision of the railed-off population, and did my best to escape it. General reporting was pleasanter. Shorthand I never mastered, for the simple reason that I never needed it, and could get on to my longhand notes, or on to the tablets of my mind, a good deal more than I ever wanted to transcribe. All along, I suffered from fastidiousness of style. It became so acute that I lost the power of writing altogether, and for fear of using the wrong word would sit in miserable vacancy before the virgin page, while the clock raced its way to the fatal hour of going to press. This over-delicacy soon passed away, and I got to write as carelessly as the rest of the world.

My friendship with Mr. Spilling, despite the disparity of years, was both a comradeship and a lamp to my unguided youth. Mr. Tillett had his playful and most delightful side, and he liked the society of young people, but he was so Olympian of port that, with all my affection for him, I was always a little afraid of him. His mystical evangelicalism did not catch my fancy, and I found myself constantly and silently answering his apologetics out of my memories of *Supernatural Religion*, or some other iconoclast of the hour. With Mr. Spilling, my relations were easier. He made a good editor, and an occasional vein of satire in his writing as 'Cherub' gave the paper a tone of liveliness and independence. But his vital interest was not politics but religion; he wanted to popularize Swedenborg, much more than to unfold the banner of Nonconformity, and hold up the arms of the Grand Old Man. He encouraged my verse and rebuked my prose, and we even planned a literary adventure or two together, including a Bowdlerized Byron, which broke down, I think, somewhere in the earlier stages of *Don Juan*. But, as I have said, it was his sweetness of character, and the gentle determination of his mind to goodness and charity, which drew me even more than his intellectual gifts. A different type, more the man of the world, but with the same charm of Christian benevolence, was Charles

Noverre, for so many years the musical critic of the *Daily Press*.

The intellectual atmosphere of the Norwich of those days was not specially bracing. I found it keenest in the little Unitarian circle at the Octagon. But elsewhere, letters had small honour in the city of Sir Thomas Browne. Few books were reviewed in the Press, daily or weekly. To the horrified imagination of most good citizens the theatre seemed merely to point 'the way to the Pit', and its maintenance must have been an almost daily struggle to Mr. Fred Morgan, its lessee. Only music seemed to live a slightly belated but still a real and unforced life of its own. Indeed, the true links of local culture were wanting. There was no vital connection between the Grammar School and the City, between the Cathedral and the musical taste of the citizens. And politics, even to an orthodox young Liberal such as I was, seemed to lack elements of reality and progress. The Labour Party was not born: and Liberalism, which was practically identified with Dissent, had hardly begun to range itself with the advancing thought of the times and the needs of a new generation. I see these things less darkly now than in the days when I was a small part of them. But I have it still strongly impressed on my memory that for competence and a certain geniality and health of tone, the *Daily Press* of Mr. Spilling took a high rank in provincial journalism. It never had a rival, for the simple reason that it was too good to let a rival live.

Written for the Jubilee Commemoration of the 'Eastern Daily Press,' in October, 1920.

NOTE

James Spilling was Editor of the *Eastern Daily Press* from 1873–1897. My father carefully preserved the presentation copy of a religious work by him, published in 1879 (when H. W. M. was working under him). He re-read part of it during the last month of his life.

This article and the two following all deal, in part or wholly, with his early life in his native city. The reader will find a few minor repetitions, but they cover at most a dozen or so lines, and I confess I do not like to throw out anything from the

autobiographical sketches. All I have done is to alter the title of this piece. The three of them are all light on the wing, and make, I think, a very pleasant variation upon the more serious selections.

These memories are what he describes in a private letter as 'some rather frisky reminiscences.'—H.J.M.

WHAT drove me to journalism? Partly circumstances, partly my own restlessness. My father was one of the founders of a provincial journal which was a notable power in its day, and still enjoys a prosperous old age. My dear old guardian and friend, Mr. J. H. Tillett – one of the original members of the Anti-Corn Law League, a friend of Cobden and of Bright, and a man of real gifts of oratory – was another, and a more notable associate of the band of Radical Nonconformists who started the *Norfolk News*.

My father died when I was quite young, and left my mother, with a tiny fortune, to struggle with the education of three boys, of whom I was the second. Between her and me there was never the deep and intimate sympathy which must make the relation of mother and son the most beautiful in the wide world. Her strongest affection was rightly given to my elder brother, whose glorious star – and his was the most beautiful character, and the most profound and powerful intellect I have ever known – was extinguished before its race had well begun. But she was a woman whose passion was justice, and after that knowledge, and for years of unhesitating devotion she stinted herself that her children might have a career.

She sent us all to Norwich Grammar School. The head master was Dr. Jessopp, who was and is the best, as he is the most accomplished, of men. I suppose I did pretty well. I know that I read voraciously, and at sixteen I was a better scholar than I have ever been since. There was a question of going up to the University for a scholarship. I said Oxford; my mother, who knew me better than I knew myself, said Cambridge. Who can measure the obstinacy, the self-conceit, of youth? I would not give way; and Mr. Tillett intervening with a suggestion of journalism, I jumped at the chance, and left school to take my seat at a reader's desk.

Was I happy? I was utterly miserable. Unfitted as I was for the life of a student, I could not, at once, reconcile myself to the various and shallow interests of journalism. And after a year or so I fell into a melancholy of soul, which I think only my kind old editor suspected. Ill-health had, I suppose, some-

thing to do with it; but I remember to this day how, at last, all power of writing deserted me. I could not frame six consecutive sentences. Taught to do everything exactly and nicely, remembering my Horace and Virgil, I could not, for the life of me, apply myself to the work of the police-court, the descriptive 'par', the 'leaderette', the thousand and one tasks of the provincial newspaper, in which one kind of function melts into another. It seemed to me that everything was at an end. If I could not write, of what use was I to myself or to the world? I thought of suicide. I hung over the bridge on my way home, and wondered what so useless a creature was made for. At length a strong and gentle hand drew me out of the depths. I recovered some power of coherent thought and expression. And then the old trouble gradually faded out of my life.

London, of course, drew me. When does it not? I came up to Town with an introduction to three journalists, all of whom received me kindly. One of the letters was to Mr. Edmund Yates, who was the kindest of all. I remember that I had prepared for an astonished world a printed page of extracts from my literary masterpieces – leaders, poems, epigrams, descriptions – the fine flower of the accomplishment of eighteen. Mr. Yates, I am bound to say, did not seem to me to be overpowered. He dismissed somewhat lightly my timid references to these works of genius; yes, they showed promise, but they were not *quite* up to the *World* standard.

But he offered me on the spot the post of local correspondent to the *World*, a proposition which, as I was bent on going to London, I rejected with the hauteur which must have seemed to him in excellent keeping with my general presumption. But let me make this late tribute to the kindness and condescension of the great man, then at the height of his fame and power.

Well, I remained. I wrote a London letter for my old paper. I got a little work at the National Press Agency. I was quite lonely, but perfectly happy. The British Museum revealed a new world to me; or rather, it linked itself to my boy's student life, and gave me the first sense of what the underside of journalism meant.

I see the same figures to-day under the same great dome – shabby men bent over a pile of books. They are older now, as I am older; but I see no change in them. They are slaves of the lamp which never goes out, but which for them has only a wintry refreshment in its beams.

In London I had no very rapid or sudden success. It has been my good or ill fortune through life never to have much money, and never to want it. Having no urge of pressing poverty at my back, I enjoyed myself very much, saw London through the eyes of the young provincial, described things which were very new to me, but were as familiar to the Londoner as the stones of Fleet Street, polished and re-polished my articles, and was quite happy if one in six was accepted.

Then, slowly, the door of journalism opened out to me. What delight to see and talk to a great man made visible flesh at last, or even to some working journalist who wrote for the great papers I had read all my life, walked in and out of the sacred temples where Truth lit her nightly lamp, and did not even seem overpowered by the honour!

I close these notes with a remembrance of my entrance into what was then, more than it is now, the great exchange of London journalism. I mean the Lobby of the House of Commons. A few years ago the Lobby was filled, not only with journalists, but with a crowd which seemed to me to give a more genuine aspect of life and activity to the House than in later years it has worn. Everybody was then admitted – Parliamentary agents, representatives of all kinds of institutions, and also, I suspect, not a few nondescript adventurers. Amid this busy throng I stood unknown, *gauche*, timid, incapable of making effective use of the few opportunities which were open to me. One of the Lobby characters of that day – I speak of the close of the Parliament of 1880 – was Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a journalist himself, and a friend of the *rodeurs* who trod the much-worn pavement. Another figure was that of dear old Mr. Chesson, who, when he died, left many good causes bereaved of their only strong friend. He was good enough to admit me to a little gathering of journalists who did something to give interest to the early history of the

National Liberal Club. Such memories as his are of the salt of the earth.

I know nothing of the Parliament of 1874, and I never even saw 'Dizzy', who died some years before I came to town. My first experience of the House was at the close of the 1880 Parliament, when Churchill's [1] star was in the ascendant; and when Gladstone, fatigued by constant attacks, and with an inner vein of repugnance to the Egyptian policy of his Cabinet, seemed shaken in his own person and in his political power.

Churchill [1] I always admired. He seemed to me to have acquired the Parliamentary manner to perfection. He was so quick, so adroit, so passionate, and, allowing for a certain want of polish in his style, so marvellously gifted in the art of clear, continuous argument, developed with thorough mastery of his subject, and showing order and fulness in preparation. He always appeared to me to have the Radical temperament, and I used to think then (I am speaking of 1884) what a combination he, Chamberlain, Morley, Dilke, and Rosebery would make when the old man ceased to lead. How the skies have been rolled together since then!

NOTE

Being written for *M.A.P.* (1898), this is not another fragment (see p. 276) of the 'Autobiography', though he intended to use part of the material in it. I retain it, because any and all of his personal and retrospective impressions are sure to be particularly valued and cherished by the reader.—H.J.M.

[1] Lord Randolph Churchill.

NORWICH AS I REMEMBER IT

THE Norwich of my youth was a city without omnibuses, trams, modern 'stores' with classic porticoes and plate-glass windows, arcades, fast trains to London or anywhere else. There were rows of old houses of a soft brown colouring, and many little crooked streets, whose outline was broken up with little old churches, and with openings into covered pathways, which in their turn led into 'yards', set round with tiny houses. The chief means of communication were carriers' carts, a coach with a spanking team or two that ran to Cromer before the railway got there, a row of closed cabs, only less venerable than the horses that drew them, and so attached to their station in the market-place that it seemed an impiety to lure them from it. The city had only just recovered from the sensation of its first daily newspaper, which had seemed a prodigy of enterprise, and one of its institutions was the town-crier, with a voice that might have been heard from one end of the cattle-market to the other, who hawked the *Daily Press* about. The first board-schools were also being built, and there was much agitation as to whether, and how much, religion should be taught in them. For the rest, its chief products were clergymen and Dissenting ministers, beer (in cheering quantities, which swelled to still more generous proportions at election times), and the public-houses in which it was consumed, choir-boys and grammar-school boys, Yarmouth 'bloaters', boots and shoes, cheese-cakes, sold at one of the two or three confectioners' shops in the town, and esteemed a great luxury, Norfolk turkeys and sausages, and nothing else in particular that I can recall. I was early taught to regard it as a home of piety, but I have since had some doubts on the subject.

Society was divided into two compartments – Church and Chapel. Each section lived apart, and regarded the other with no favourable eyes. In the main, the Established Church founded itself on the old-established industries of banking, brewing, wine-selling, and the still more ancient pursuit, which largely prevailed in the Cathedral Close, of doing nothing at all. In my time the Bishop was Dr. Pelham, a tall, stately figure, with kind eyes; and the Dean was Dr. Goulburn, severe

and portly of aspect, and of an erudition much bruited about in the city, though its foundations were not, I think, very closely examined by the maiden ladies who secretly adored him. In short, Church, with the dominating Cathedral, absorbed most of the aristocracy of Norwich. On the other hand, Dissent, which was very strong, and counted more than one preacher of exceptional attractions, had a hold on the shopkeeping class, and in return for being slightly looked down on in this world, cherished rather confident opinions of its prospects in the next, coupled with serious doubts as to the Anglican position there. The Catholics, together with a formidable local atheist, who managed to get elected on the school board, were largely consigned to perdition. There was little social intercourse between the two main bodies, and the political division into Liberals and Conservatives more or less corresponded with the religious one.

As for the workpeople, few bothered about their religious opinions, if they had any. In politics they played a more serious part. John Bright's 'residuum' were believed to vote Tory (for a consideration, or in token of their disapproval of Liberal ideas on the temperance question), while the more skilled and better paid men generally went Liberal, which they did with the greater willingness inasmuch as the mighty and popular firm of Colman, employing many hundreds of men and women, was itself of the Liberal persuasion. Neither Socialism nor any distinctive phase of working-class politics had ever been heard of.

As for the elections, they were as open and jovial a carnival as that of Eatanswill, and on the eve and at the close of the poll the scene in the thronged market-place, ablaze with the Liberal blue and white and the Tory orange and purple, and merry with horseplay, made an almost Hogarthian picture of Victorian England. Bribery was general and notorious, though denied by the chiefs of both parties, and for years the contests were followed by petitions, whose disclosures now and then did sad damage to local reputations of a more or less sanctified type. The great Liberal objective was to secure the return of the darling of the party, Mr. J. H. Tillett, my guardian, and also a kind friend and relation. Alternatively, the Conserva-

tive intent was to keep him out. Until 1880 this crusade and vendetta went on with much zeal, and then suddenly collapsed.

There was little literary life in the old city, and the two good libraries were chiefly patronized for their novels, whilst the scientific interest was largely represented by a local manufacturer, who combined an orthodox, or nearly orthodox, faith with the cult of Darwinism. Mr. Harmer, the gentleman in question, had his own way of reconciling these sharply opposed conceptions of the universe, but I fear it carried little conviction. The famous school of Norwich painters had come to an end; though a Cotman of real power remained, but the recurring festivals and a local musician or two kept a fairly general love of music alive.

The finest Norwich institution was the Grammar School, which Dr. Jessopp, my own head master, had raised to a high pitch of scholarship. He was, in his way, a great schoolmaster, with a noble care for his promising pupils and a belief in the possibilities of the School which were fully realized after his departure for Scarning Rectory, though it also came to fine fruition during his long reign in the noble old schoolroom under the shadow of the still nobler cathedral. There my happiest days were spent, and the humdrum life of the old city underwent, for my young eyes at least, something of an ideal transformation.

From the 'Sphere' of February 2, 1924.

NOTE

But not a word of the croquet-parties, for they came later. What test-matches, what embittered rivalries, what expertries, what hard and raucous blues, reds and yellows of the contending mallets! To be a spectator of these impassioned contests on lawns grotesquely suave and unimpeachably discreet was accounted a privilege to me hardly less honourable than if I had been witness in person of the feats of Balder or the discus-throwing of the Olympians.—H.J.M.

CORSICA IN SPRING

'A L'ODEUR seule je devinerais la Corse les yeux fermés', was a famous saying of Napoleon at St. Helena. The lovely island retains her scented breath,[1] but it is only one of her distinguishing charms. All of them can be assembled in the expressive, the enigmatic word – beauty. Corsica has rivals, but they do not compare with her. Provence has its rather hard and melancholy grace, while the French Riviera flaunts its pretty, coquettish outline and towny glitter. But Corsica is a masterpiece which, though man has wrought on it, softening its harshness, and patterning out its rich valleys and shaggy slopes into a fine tracery of orchards and terraced vines and little green garden-farms, remains the purest, most entire and least spoilt design of Nature I have ever seen. The design is of a perpetual variety. It is a gradation of highland and lowland scenery, rising from alluvial plain and still, blue lagoon, or from flower-strewn lawns threaded with streamlets, and bright as the fields of Enna, into the wonderful hill-country with its silver olive-groves and its changing but ever-green dress of cystus and myrtle and heather and arbutus. This is the *maquis*, or Mediterranean scrub, on which the Corsican climate, the Corsican agriculture, the Corsican beauty all depend, and it reaches up from the open, park-like suburbs of towns like Ajaccio to the bare shoulders of the greater hills. Higher still is the forest land of ilex and pine and finally of chestnut, and highest of all the mighty peaks and snow-covered *arêtes* of the great central chain.

This scheme of loveliness is so laid out that one thinks, not of Nature's prodigal hand, but of the careful brain of some magnified non-natural Scottish gardener. Again and again the melody is set; again and again the composer rebuilds his fugue and combines it with some new variation of form and colour. As for the lower fields, they are spring gardens of silver-grey asphodels, set in beds of dog-violets and star anemones, or blue lupins, or yellow irises, or amid the feathery

[1] An admirable and almost solitary account of the flowers of Corsica has just been given in Miss Dorothy Archer's fascinating book, *Corsica: the Scented Isle*. (Methuen.)

clusters of the wild asparagus or the fresh green of the young bracken, or glowing with purple orchises and the gay blooms of the wild cyclamen. Yet again the champaign becomes a land of rose-like white cistus, relieved here and there with the bolder colouring of the large purple variety. Later on comes the narcissus, and later still the myrtles break into starry flower. Then the gay procession ends, and autumn, and the Southern sun which has made all this beauty possible, conquer it, and with the cessation of the rains the green tempers down into the brown of Provence.

That is one Corsica. You may see it all as your car rushes down the mountain-side from the Chapel of San Bastiano to the plain of the Liamone and the sapphire sea, its white beaches fretted into a hundred pretty curves, that fills the Bay of Sagone. Little of wild beauty here. Just a patch of yellow gorse to deepen the white bloom on the cherry-trees, or a group of poplars to overhang the new vine-tufts, or a grove of olive trees, heavenly bright on the side they turn to the sun that lights the sea a thousand feet below. But travel higher up, through miles of white cistus, past the old Greek town of Cargèse to Piana, the pleasant foreground of the tremendous panorama of the Calanches. The Calanches are a little like the Dolomites, just as parts of the *maquis* are a little like a wilder and more various Dartmoor. But these tremendous bastions, whose walls of red granite fall from a tremendous height sheer into the Gulf of Porto, impress the mind like no rock scenery I have ever looked on. The mark of man's early handiwork was that it caricatured Nature. Here Nature seems to have tried her hand at caricaturing man. His face and figure, his art, his temples, and the forms and gestures of animals, appearing in a hundred mocking and distorted shapes, blend into an unintelligible picture of violent overthrow and piled-up ruin. And the knowledge that all this is fantasy, and that, if Nature designed anything, her aim appears not in these grinning parodies of the life of man but in his smiling conquests in the valleys below, has not an instantly reassuring effect on one's spirits. They rise again as one quits this Corsican Brocken, and, winding swiftly down the gorge as it narrows precipitately, to plunge into some stream of Acheron beneath,

lands amid the cherry blossoms and chestnut trees of Evisa.

Except for these wild episodes, the 'note' of Corsican scenery is not of a stern, far less a forbidding type. In his *Studies in Corsica* Mr. J. W. Barry shows that, in describing the ascent to Paradise, Milton painted an unconscious, but none the less exact, picture of the Corsican bush with its

> 'Champaign head
> Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides,
> With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
> Access denied; and overhead there grew
> Insuperable height of lofty shade,
> Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
> A silvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
> Shade above shade, a woody theatre
> Of stateliest view'.

And if there be also 'flowers worthy of Paradise', and trees of 'odorous gums and balm', and 'mantling vines', and 'fringed banks with myrtle crowned', not these delights alone, but the mightier offerings of forest and mountain, make the Miltonic and the Corsican Eden.

The same mixture of charm and austerity constitutes, unless the witnesses speak false, the Corsican character too. If the vendetta is not yet a joke, banditry, even in the romantic person of Mr. Romanetti – who stands, by general consent, at the head of his profession – is tolerably near one. For Mr. Romanetti, like a more famous Frenchman, *donne dans la bergerie*, and it is whispered that his profits as a leading figure in the lamb and kid trade eclipse those of his more spectacular enterprise. As for the average Corsican, I should not be disposed to give him high marks in the valet class. He is too much of an islander and a freeman for that. But he seems to have a genuine liking for a tolerably courteous and interested stranger. If the town Corsican is reproached with surliness, I did not observe it; on the contrary, our small company was most hospitably and kindly entertained. And save for the tiny brown donkeys, staggering and almost invisible under their stalwart or buxom riders, or the following loads of fag-

gots or household goods (the Corsican seems to be continually in a state of 'removing' somewhere), the sights on the road – the swineherd enticing his charges to follow him by scattering chestnuts in their path, the flocks of pretty, long-haired sheep or goats, the women in broad straw hats or the graceful *mandile*, knitting as they walk, and often beautiful with the grave Italian beauty, the children with a smile and a greeting for the stranger – are all cheerful, and suggest the happy middle lot of mankind, cast between riches and dearth.

Is a touch of the unusual, so dear to the modern traveller's heart, required? You may find it in some swarthy shepherd, stepping out from the roadside *maquis* in brown velveteens and with a double-barrelled rifle over his shoulder; or in a strolling pair of armed gendarmes, professionally equipped for an encounter which never – or is it hardly ever? – comes off; or (should you chance to be in Sartène on Good Friday) in a procession of penitents in black hooded cloaks, the chief penitent barefooted, dragging a heavy chain riveted to his leg, and bowed beneath the weight of a huge cross. For old custom lingers in a country where the people are few (though they seem to rear enormous families), and the means of communication, though easy and pleasant enough for visitors, hardly yet reach the mountain villages of the interior.[1]

Another kind of primitiveness clings to the Italianate streets of Ajaccio or Bastia, with houses five or even seven stories high and an incredible number of people inhabiting them, and a mixed population of prowling cats, muzzled dogs, children playing hop-scotch, and casual residents sewing in the sun, or grinding coffee, or taking the air in front of the cavernous wine-shops with the sign of an inverted bush hanging from their lintels, and all the pleasant clatter of a Southern quarter. It is astonishing that, with these delights, such a small contingent of bored sojourners on the Riviera seem to dare the sea-passage of eight hours from Nice, or thirteen from Mar-

[1] They have already been much improved as the result of the interest that the P.L.M. has begun to take in their development. There is an excellent motor service connecting the chief places of interest, and the railways are comfortable and convenient, and a journey by them is interesting on account of the lovely scenery through which they run.

seilles, to enjoy them and exchange Casino and Promenade for an air soft as Sicily's, sweet with the scent of myriads of flowers, yet keen enough to give relish to the generous mountain wines and the simple mountain fare, in a land where the fields are gardens, and the hills clothe themselves to-day with the glories of the high Alps, and to-morrow with the loveliness of a Devon moor.

From the 'Spectator' of July 19, 1924.

NOTE

All I feel lacking to this expression of content and ease is, not Napoleon (he inevitably appeared in an article my father wrote for the *Christian Science Monitor*), but the birds, and the Bronze Age remains to follow upon Mr. Romanetti and the flowers. I questioned him narrowly upon the subject of hoopoes and dolmens, but answer gave he none.

Yet there are many passages in the letters about birds, and he campaigned in the *Nation* both for the Plumage Bill and against the pigeon-shooting at Monte Carlo, a place for which he had an odd relish. The people intrigued him (for a few days) as all drama did. Here is a bit out of the letters about birds from the cottage in Oxfordshire: 'I had made a great discovery of a new bird, with an unidentified note, and had serious thoughts of putting it forward and displacing him [that's me] as the Great Bird Fancier. But it turned out to be a demented old blackbird, which had contrived a great imitation of the cottage pump (hi-hu, hi-hu) and has been practising it ever since. So adieu to my greatness in the bird line!'—H.J.M.

Most visitors to the Accademia at Venice – making their way slowly round the great room on whose walls Carpaccio, sweetest and quaintest of chroniclers, tells the story of the life and death of S. Ursula – come to a fascinated pause before two pictures. The first is Gentile Bellini's great representation of the Square of S. Mark, filled with an ecclesiastical procession, a nobly ordered mass of clerics and monks and senators and men of fashion – 'sparks' and 'bloods' of old Venice. The second is Carpaccio's painting entitled *A Sick Man Healed by the True Cross*. It is not the subject that fixes the eye so much as the vivid way in which it helps you to realize the Venice that has been and will be no more. Right before you is the quay by which the steel prow of your gondola was gliding only a few hours ago as you stayed its course to take in the giant curve of the Rialto Bridge, and to stray a few delicious moments into the old market-place, with its heaped and tangled mass of fruit and flower shops, bright with a hundred hues, and its merry clatter of shrill voices. Of the great vault of Cicogna's bridge you see nothing in Carpaccio's picture. It is the old Rialto Bridge, with its square clumsy wooden supports which confronts you, the dark timbers relieved by glimpses of white and gold from the vestments of the priests that crowd the narrow footway.

Overhead is a clustered pile of palaces, towers, and bell-shaped chimneys, just such chimneys as you may still see crowning an old house by the creek that leads to forsaken Torcello. On the great quay is assembled the rank and statesmanship and fashion of Venice, men with hard, clean-shaven faces, dressed in skull-caps and loose robes falling to their feet. But the beauty and delight of the picture are centred in the sparkling group of gondolas darting hither and thither under the piers of the bridges, halting at the marble steps, or being oared across the Grand Canal. The *poppe* stands, as he stands to-day, on the tilted stern of his gondola, his body bent forward in the gondolier's graceful stroke – ending with a sharp, deft recovery and turn of the oar. And what a marvel of tricked-out dandyism the lithe young fellow is! His little cap is scarlet,

his sleeves are elaborately slashed and puffed, his hose have broad bright stripes along their shapely length, his long yellow hair flows in crisp ripples over his shoulders, much as it does in Carpaccio's famous picture of S. George and the Dragon. The gondolas are less graceful, less slender than their counterparts of to-day, though their hulls are of the same hearse-like hue. Now hose and doublet are gone, but the old instinct for colour still breaks out in a gay scarf, or a red shirt, or a dainty bow.

The other great picture of Gentile Bellini – a composition which for sheer magnificence of line and form and colour and arrangement makes you a moment forget the suave beauty of John Bellini's faces – shows you S. Mark's as it was before the restorations, with the solemn campanile as it stood before it was isolated by the fine Renaissance colonnade facing the south side of the square. In the midst of the great piazza stroll deliciously-decked figures, cloak on shoulder, hand on sword-hilt. In the centre of the great procession of civic and ecclesiastical notabilities is the ample kneeling figure of the merchant whose son has been miraculously healed by the relic now borne in splendour in the midst of the grouped worshippers. Above everything the eye is caught and fixed by the vision of S. Mark's as it appeared to the great painter in the middle of the fifteenth century. The interior of S. Mark's, from its pavement of serpentine to its wall of alabaster and its roof and cupolas of gold and many colours, preserves a certain unity and concentration of effect at once solemn and gorgeous. But outside, and especially on the mosaics of the porches, the changes are manifold. In Bellini's picture the severe Byzantine figures, erect in their dark drapery, repeat, in the arched and emblazoned porticoes of the great church, the lessons and stories taught in myriad figures and symbols within. To-day the gold is rarer, the colours are less vivid, and figures draped in pretty but washy blues and pinks replace those stern, sentinel-like Byzantine saints. The gold has faded from many a figure, and the breasts of the Greek horses no longer glisten with their old refulgence. Still S. Mark's stands not appreciably changed. The range of low rounded porches, with their slender clustered pillars of alabaster and porphyry and Greek marble; arch after

arch carved into a vision of cunning tracery of leaves and flowers and fruit and birds and beasts and men and women, and reproducing the delicate wavy line of the ogee; the wave-like finish of marble tracery at the roof and at the wings of the great front; the lovely panellings of red and grey and pink marbles; above them the saints and apostles (S. Mark high over them all) guarding the whole length and breadth of the church, and preluding as it were the myriad-stringed harmony of Christian story and legend which is woven in cunning glass-work into the five-domed roof within – all these things can be seen and enjoyed in the S. Mark's of to-day. To most modern travellers it all comes as a first awakening touch of Eastern art. The grouped cupolas, the decorative use of the arch, the absence of that stupendous uplifting of roof and buttress and tower, which is the mark of our own Northern Gothic, have all disappeared. You are, as it were, in a new heaven and a new earth, incomparably fairer, and, in their way, not less mighty, than our own.

Or take another glimpse into the Venice of old which cannot be gleaned from the walls of her churches and palaces, but must be sought in a long delightful row across the lagoons to old Torcello, seven miles away. Your boat slips – with the delicious half-jerk, half-slide, of the gondola – over shallow reaches of grey, opal water that is at once sea and no sea, with subtle shimmery green tints flying over its surface. You float past the Campo Santo, the sea cemetery of Venice with walls washed by the green wave, and along the channelled sea-way, marked by a double line of high posts that look ghostly enough in the twilight. Before you stretches island after island, rising phantom-like out of a delicate tremulous haze, now a single cluster of green trees, now a bastion of red sea-wall, now a group of villages marked out by the inevitable campanile. At length – a long winding creek bordered by low bushes, and now and then a bit of sun-burned wall, with lizards darting over it, overhung by golden clusters of pomegranates. You follow idly the little waves that the motion of your gondola makes along the flower-strewn banks, and beneath them you catch a glimpse of marble steps, worn and grey, which the tide leaves completely uncovered. That is the wreck of old, old

Torcello, an elder Venice moored farther out to sea. The creek ends in a little grass-grown street flanked by wretched cottages and ending in a square with – wonder of wonders! – an ancient eleventh-century cathedral. Here you may find again many of the marvels of S. Mark's – the tessellated pavement, the harsh Byzantine figures with their setting of gold mosaic on the roof, the marble pillars, the delicate carvings in stone, the attendant campanile, but all on a simpler, severer scale. The marble-work is exquisite, the peacocks are a pure delight. On your way back you stop at ancient Burano, where the girls in the lace-works have beautiful, Madonna-like faces and the boys that run by your gondola seem to be looking out at you from John Bellini's pictures. In front, as the great solid pillow-clouds mass themselves east and west, and the sunset deepens into gold and fades into purple, you see the domes and towers of Venice in cold shadow, with perhaps just a touch of mellow light on the dome of Sta. Maria della Salute. Overhead is the imposing vault of sky, vaster, deeper, clearer than any firmament that we know of. Between Torcello and Venice there move now nothing but the fruit-laden gondolas, heaped with piles of purple grapes and green melons. The peasant women sit at their eternal knitting in the stern, and their bronze brothers or husbands are labouring at the oar. Eight hundred years ago there must have been rich argosies, laden with marble and precious stones and the treasures of two great civilizations, afloat on the lagoons that now bear these humble burdens. And to-day the lovely island church, and the broken slabs of marble uncovered at low tide, are alone left to tell the story of what Torcello has been.

It is indeed the concentrated and continuous reminder of the past that gives Venice its dimmed but still its ever-present glory. And, spite of the Ruskinites, it is only the human setting of the great Republic that is irretrievably lost to us. Gone are Tintoretto's Doges and Senators – with their furs and velvets, their serious faces and well-trimmed beards, the type of noble citizenship. But if we will not insist with Ruskin that all Venetian art that came after 1420 – a century, by the way, before his own favourite Tintoret! – is bad and vile, and if we will give due thanks to a nation that does in

some fashion guard the art treasures it is merciful enough not to restore, and the palaces that under the Austrian rule were running to mere slovenly decay – we shall find delight enough and to spare in Venice. Of course there is tastelessness too – barbarity crueller even than the iron abortion that meanly closes in the first great sweep of the Grand Canal from the Riva dei Schiavoni, and the squat steamers whose vicious wash loosens the nails in the gondolas, and may one day, say the experts, undermine the foundations of the palaces. In truth, the modern Venetian is an admirable person, but he has lost his sense of art. If he had his way, I am sure, with his passionate but quite hopeless zeal for reviving the commercial glory of Venice, he would fill up the canals and turn the Piazzetta into a coal-wharf. One of the most delightful things in all Venice are the frescoes by Longhi which adorn a noble staircase in the eighteenth-century palace known as the Grassi. The palace is in the possession of a rich Italian noble. His stately staircase is beautified for ever by Longhi's frescoes. You look across the marble balustrade, and in front and on both sides of you you have the most enchanting groups of eighteenth-century loungers in the world – ladies with hoop skirts and elaborate toilets drinking tea and paying calls, a flirting abbé in a yellow silk skull-cap, gossips and scandal-mongers and courtiers, all in a harmony of cool greys and delicious browns and chocolates. It is the work of a Hogarth (you may see more of him in some miniature studies in the Accademia) without Hogarth's satiric intention. And on the ceiling above you the noble owner of the palace has fixed a murderous modern fresco, and poor Longhi expires of a hot libation of vermilion and ochre. But these are trifles. Venice remains, not a glorious fragment like Florence, but able still to tell her story, not only in S. Mark's and the ducal palace, and on the canvases of Bellini and Bonifazio and Titian and Tintoret, and on the marble faces of her Doges as they slumber on in her great sepulchre-churches, but in the tracery of her countless palaces, in many a lovely *cortile* with the vine-spray climbing over the grey garden-wall, and in countless reminiscences so easy to summon, so hard to efface, of her and our great men – of Shakespeare and Goethe and Byron and George

Sand and Gautier and many another. From that lovely window, framed in the ogee arch, in the Danieli Hotel, Alfred de Musset looked out. From that old Renaissance palace – with its

'Marble base
And steps the fish swim over twice a day' –

Byron took his night swims on the Grand Canal with the moonlight over the dome of Sta. Maria della Salute lighting his path. And all these memories are embalmed in the most magical of pleasure-houses. From it all street noises, save the voices of men and women and children using the softest forms of modern Italian speech, are shut out. Dust and hurry are unknown. Your nightly tourist's stroll is either over the softly-moving waters of a sea-street, whose houses are abodes for kings, and whose giant façades gleam fitfully under the stars, or on the flooring of a square set round with every lovely device of form and colour that stone and marble can receive. That is Venice still, and though you now and then deplore a Gothic palace 'restored' to modern trimness, or an old picture with the lovely softness of surface and delicacy of texture blurred into woolly coarseness, these things do not mar the rapture of your fascinated loiterings.

And then the art of the great city! Renaissance sculpture and architecture are to be seen in their full glory in Florence alone, with Michelangelo, and Donatello, and Brunelleschi as their interpreters. But for all that Venice holds countless treasures of the days when every good Ruskinian is bound to believe that her glory had departed for ever. Ruskin indeed is a bad guide to Venice, though he is incomparably a worse one to Florence. For a poetic stimulant he is excellent; as an art instructor he will not do. The Ruskinian method is to hold you horror-stricken before some monstrosity of late Renaissance work, and then hurry you back to the fairest embodiments of the Gothic spirit, modified as it is here and all over Italy by influences which were not Gothic at all. It is not till the traveller breaks from Ruskinian swaddling bands, and uses his eyes for himself, that he sees the truth, and that now the elder severity, now the later freedom and expansiveness, win

his fancy. Pass under the Bridge of Sighs and look up at the Rio façade of the ducal palace. How flat and feeble the line of wall where the Gothic work begins; what a gorgeous mass of masonry, with mighty depths of light and shade, with infinite variety and strength of design, frowns down on you, where the Renaissance builder had his way! And a few yards further on the subtlety of the earlier craftsmen, their deep gaze behind sense and outward things, hold you as you laboriously trace out the clustered designs on the capitals of the colonnade that looks out on the sea. And then again your gondola leaves you at the door of a gem-like little Renaissance church, full of the most exquisite and delicate tracery, and the Ruskinian oracle bids you remark the sinfulness of the artist who (in the mere sportiveness of fancy) has tied the babies' heads to vine-stems. The sacristan, who shows you these and other treasures with all the pride of guardianship, has a truer sense of the meaning of Renaissance art. 'Not angels, but children', he insists, unconsciously parodying a historic epigram, as he touches lovingly the pretty gay heads, withal so firmly and strongly chiselled.

From the 'English Illustrated Magazine' of December, 1893.

NOTE

I include 'An Impression of Venice' here, because my father's work is rich in impressions of people rather than places. It offers, too, an interesting contrast with the impression of Corsica, and reveals how his work gained force and spareness from the years. One hardly thinks of him as a writer with continuity of development at all; if his tools had an evolution, it was not in their 'cutting edge', as the archæologist says. But having read through a great mass of his writings, I now have no doubt that his latest work was his best and strongest. The essay itself is not particularly good nor true, but it is illuminating from the point of view of progress in the craft of writing.

But I think my chief and the best reason for including this piece is that he obviously wrote it when he was happy and while drifting on the calm waters of respite between the weirs.

—H.J.M.

A WEEK-END IN HOLLAND

Should any one of my readers be in want of a rest-cure for the mind, I would prescribe a long week-end in Holland. Not that the country looks idle; the weedless field, the spotless doorstep, the curious and related mechanism of land and water which *is* Holland, all symbolize an industry greater than our own. It is the rhythm of Dutch things which is so reposeful. Instead of the motor-car, the bicycle; in place of the railway, the canal boat. The grinding wheel, the engine's clang and roar, beat out the Niebelungs' chorus of our industrial life, while wind and water do nine-tenths of the Dutchman's haulage. The traveller's eye, therefore, has time to take in the detail of his pilgrimage, and the detail is nearly all pleasant. Windmills with their thatched and hooded caps; great brown-sailed barges, whose capacious bellies hold the contents of one of our rattling truck-trains; little single-street towns, with gardens dipping into the water; and long, long meadows, full of black and white cows, and spring-green in the drought, that before you know it slip into cities whose streets are of water; scores of little bridges, and swarms of laughing children on them; little lakes, dotted with white sails and embosomed in clear grey skies; miles of rushes, their tops brushed by the lovely flight of the sea-swallow; red church towers, ending in fine fretwork; red-roofed villages by the Zuyder Zee, and broad-based villagers to live in them; few slums and no deserts; not too much humanity, but enough of it – that is Holland. This people seems to have been a tremendous race, giants were given them for leaders, and their greatest pictures make most things in the painting line look amateurish in comparison. But it is unusual to see so much done with so little fussiness. The country is not every man's fancy; Mr. Sidney Webb, I imagine, would like to drown it all over again. But I thought it charming, and I found myself often thinking with a sigh that a small, self-contained country, with an intelligent people, can make a better business of Socialism and Individualism, and altogether a better hand of the business of life, than a big Empire can do.

The glory of Holland is its colour. Everything seems to be

painted up – house-doors, barges, window-sills, bricks (the best laid in the world), all but the blue eyes and flaxen hair of the girls and children – so as finally to give a mingled impression of gaiety and repose such as no other country I know seems even to try and yield. For many passing years this national genius for colour centred in the art of painting, and the tradition is by no means dead to-day. We have many fine Dutch pictures in this country, but it is necessary to go to Holland in order to see how the most exquisite things in their art flow from the daily life of the people and are the expression of the ordered neatness of their lives. It is material and over-precise? Maybe; but if the Dutch 'primitives' exhibit the human and physical griefs of the Cross, so when their gloom passed away, and the pride of nationality and civic power kindled a little in the Hollander's heart, the love of the little garden of a land that he had literally made out of sand and sea-waves took shape in a spiritual delight. For he found that he could paint anything – from the human face to a sheet of paper or a pot of basil – and colour it so divinely as to make men's handiwork seem almost as good as Nature's. Nothing was common to such artists; not a kitchen row nor a drunkard's spree; a man's house might be his church, and its ante-room glitter like a jewelled altar. Nor was spirituality wanting to an art which, in a liberal view of it, seems the most Christian in the world. There is no more religious picture than Nicolas Maes's *Endless Prayer*, and the portraits of Terburg and Vermeer – to my mind the perfect and perfectly satisfying painter – come little behind it in the power to glorify the simple life and ennoble the refined one. Dutch painting is no celebration of poverty and dirt, as so much of ours is. Maes's praying peasant is none the worse because she is 'asking a blessing' over a salmon cutlet,[1] or Holland because its Broadland is a neat and peopled country-side, while ours is a lonely

[1] Shelley's modest idealization of 'freedom' fits Holland well. Note the 'comely table':

'For the labourer thou art bread
And a comely table spread,
From his daily labour come
In a neat and happy home.'

and half-cultured marsh; or Morland a greater artist than Jan Steen, because the Englishman is a gloomy painter and the Dutch a merry one.

From the 'Nation' of July 23, 1921.

NOTE

I so violently dissent from the last four lines with their refrain of 'Still to be neat, still to be drest' that I think with malicious pleasure upon a certain satire written by Andrew Marvell. . . .

'Glad then as Miners that have found the Ore,
They with mad labour fish'd the land to Shore;
And div'd as desperately for each piece
Of Earth, as if 't had been of Ambergreece;
Collecting anxiously small loads of Clay,
Less than what building Swallows bear away;
. . . . . .
How did they rivet, with Gigantick Piles,
Thorough the center their new-catchèd Miles;
And to the Stake a struggling Country bound,
Where barking Waves still bait the forcèd Ground;
Building their watry Babel far more high
To reach the Sea, than those to scale the Sky.'—H.J.M.

PART EIGHT: BY THE WAYSIDE

'Nay, the smaller birds also do the like in their particular seasons, as namely the leverock, the titlark, the little linnet, and the honest robin, that loves mankind both alive and dead.'

NOTE

At first I arranged all these crumbs from a rich man's table in prime order and scrupulous succession – the short prose pieces, then the epigrams, and lastly the verses. But a voice wiser than mine made a dubious noise, and luckily a second thought came, a thought of the hedgerow. And so I have tossed them all into one another, and I hope I have got that brambly effect I was after. Careless-like it is meant to be, but not quite haphazard. I wanted to have just the thinnest thread of continuity, broken in places like a line of daisies along an ancient British trackway, but taking up the trail again and never quite losing it.

Rather surprisingly, H. W. M.'S verses would make a tidy little volume of their own. I select these little shells left by the waves of a passionate, dynamic spirit, because, if you put them to your ear, you will listen not to the thunder of the surge, but a low and caressing voice you are not wont to hear.

Some readers may complain that I have given a scanty showing to the mots, aphorisms, apothegms, epigrams, cameos, or whatever they are best called, from 'Holiday Moods' in *A Wayfarer's Diary*. It is no use pretending that H. W. M. wore the mantle of La Rochefoucauld. What I have arranged on this tray are not an assortment of gems but specimens of auriferous quartz before the pounding, sifting, and refining processes.

The thumb-nail obituaries and glancing reflections are all from 'Wayfarer', with the exception of the notes on Disraeli, which I have taken from the review on Monypenny and Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, and the note on Edmund Blunden, which appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Only one of the others was not published in the *Nation* – the comment on Byron's exclusion from the Abbey, which appeared in the *New Statesman* a month before the writer's death.—H.J.M.

*

Rarely have I ever said what I wished to say. Why? Because I have tried to say what I thought would be useful to others, instead of aiming directly at self-expression, the self-satisfaction which comes of the *unreserved* delivery of one's thought.

TO THE GANNEL[1]

Sweet stream, whose silver pools now girdled lie
  By their bright, ridgèd sands, while, barely flowing,
The little heart that is thy current steals
  To the salt tide, to feed its mighty growing.

Anon, the brimming Ocean stores his wealth
  To fill thy flower-wreath'd cup, and thus repaying
The tiny largess of thy summer rills,
  Flings out his purple flood for thy arraying.

Now rolls a Thames, a Severn, 'neath thy trees,
  Till, with the hour, thou quitt'st this gorgeous seeming,
And swift returnest to thy humble state,
  Thou to thy rills, and Ocean to his teeming.

*

ON RULING AN EMPIRE

(*From the 'Postboy', a famous Broadsheet of* 17–)

Great Empires have need of stout Soldiers; and They who would rule them, having Colonies to keep, should consider that as we won these Lands by Force, and by no means with the consent of the Folk who inhabit them, it is well to choose hardy Fellows, who learned their Trade in Flanders, or the Indies, and will not be put upon by Blacks. For it is ever the fault of States that are plagued with Demagogues to think overmuch of such Praters of Liberty, and to give them Tongue, when a Gag, and a Strait Waistcoat, and a File of Redcoats, would best serve their Turn. More especially is this to be remembered when having conquered and divided a great Number of Native Princes and Territories, it happens that their Pundits cite our example, and ask whether it be not good enough for them. To which it will be enough to answer that Freedom is for those that enjoy her Favours, and that there is one Climate of the Thames and another of the Brahmaputra.

And let none who make Empires be stayed by such nonsensi-

[1] The Gannel – a river on the north coast of Cornwall.

cal Examples as that of Julius Cæsar, who paid Court to the Gauls and sat in their General Assemblies. For when did the Stronger bend to the Weaker, save for a Purpose, or be brought to Argument when the Sword would do as well? Were it so, and a Famine should break out in your Dominions, or a Pestilence, or the Population go down and the Public Charges go up, so that the Peasants' Crops were on Mortgage, and the People reduced to sore Straits, any Hilding or Spouter might lay it to your Account. Therefore it were better to put your Trust in Muskets, and straight-shooters behind them under good Discipline and trained to fire at Sight, and also in Hand Grenades and long Cannon, that in a dozen Discharges will rid you of more Rebels than fifty Proclamations.

And should some Levellers urge that your Dependents came of as ancient a Stock as you, and their civilized State earlier, or that they match you as Politicians, Lawyers, Orators, Sages, Merchants, Makers of curious Stuffs and Weavers of fine Cloths, or that they excel in Brasswork and other Fine Arts, or that their Men fight in your Armies and their Princes honour your King and subscribe to your Wars, give them the short Answer that it is for them to obey and You to rule. For it is ever the Whites that govern Black or Brown or Yellow, they being by Nature, and in their daily Practice, unmatched by all other races in Humanity, Continence, Gentleness to Man and Beast, Temperance, Modesty, Meekness, Long-Sufferingness, Forgiveness of Injuries, Inclination to Peace, and Hatred of Brawling and Frightfulness in War. But it will be simple to clinch the Matter with a Text, and to such as plead the Roman Custom (that had no regard to Colour in the ordering of their Colonies), to ask: 'Would you follow the Pagans, who knew not the true God?'

Most of all must you look to the training of your Soldiers and civil Officers in this respect – that they hold themselves apart from the Natives, and neither frequent the same Coffee-houses, nor have Bite or Sup together. Yet is there no Call for Churlishness. So that your Men sit on the Greater Councils, let them have Entry to the Lesser, and when you have filled the best Seats in the Stage-coaches, it will be a civil Act to leave them the remainder. As for those Fanaticks who preach that

all Colours are the same before God, or that Men are born to serve each other rather than to play Lord and Slave, let them have no voice in your Schools and Universities. For if Brown and White live there in Peace and Harmony, so might Master and Man in a desert Island, yet when the Party wins safely Home again, your Footman will still be standing behind your Chair.[1] So in your Dependency let all have their Place, and for the Customs, Laws, History, Arts, Characters, Feelings, Traditions, Superstitions, of the Natives, let the curious study them if they will, but 'tis no matter for their Governors. For if a young Gentleman, with the Down on his Chin, and the mark of the Cane on his last Breech but one, cannot order a Province-full of them, either there is no Virtue in him or he has gone to School to Milksops and Pedants. So, too in the Advancement of your Service he will have the most Honour who has shewn the Rudest Temper, taking no thought, so he get the Salaams of the People, to gain their Loves.

Should your Subjects, being thus entreated, be of a surly Mood, and raise a Hullabaloo of Liberty for their Press and Orators, and your Soldiers fire at their Mobs, and chance to kill or wound a Handful, there may be no holding them. And then will be the Occasion to shew the Loftiness and Magnanimity of your Spirit. For let these Fellows be no more in Terror of you, and you may whistle for your Empire. For this Reason he that discovers a new Catapult, or an Air-Machine, to rain Death on their Caucusses,[2] or a Musket that can scatter Balls like a Hurricane, is worth more to your Dominion than a Bagful of Constitution-mongers. For They being many and You but few, you must hope to hold them by your Inventions, whereby fifty Grenadiers can tame a Concourse of ten thousand, so it be that they are unarmed. Thus at the rate of one Hundred of their Lives to one of Yours, you will soon bring them to reason. And should some puling Philanthropist cry out on you, lay him by the Heels, and see to it that no Huckster of the Law rake over his musty Precedents and confound your

[1] Seemingly a Forecast of the theme of *The Admirable Crichton*.

[2] An obscure expression. Could our Party system have been so far developed in the England of 17–?

Sharp-shooting with some old-fangled Bill or Charter of Rights. For it is ever the fault of our Nation to heed its Ranters, and lend an Ear to that Cant and Jargon of Humanity by which Men pretend that no People is so good and virtuous as to be fit to rule another.

From the 'Nation' of February 28, 1920.

NOTE

There are a number of other pieces written in the same vein. This, in my view, is the most successful.

He refers to one of them in a letter:

'I didn't go away, but read and wrote all the time – especially Swift and Inge (the two gloomy Deans). I've tried a parody of Swift's political writing for the *Nation* – on Ireland. I don't know whether it comes off. Probably not.'—H.J.M.

HENRI ROCHEFORT

I recall a characteristic view of Henri Rochefort on the evening of Victor Hugo's funeral – one of the greatest spectacles that even modern Paris has ever seen. I had a letter to him at his newspaper office; and there was the great man exhibited to my admiring gaze in his shirt sleeves, his white hair in a straight stiff mass from his forehead. He was surrounded by laughing friends and engaged in an interminable mock harangue on Hugo's poetry, the resounding and recurring refrain of which was that the great Frenchman was no better than 'un épicier'. Each time Rochefort reached the word 'épicier', he hissed it out as if Hugo's poetry was a personal offence to him. His articles were in the same vein of half-comic vituperation. Many of them were a mere Rabelaisian string of epithets, thinly threaded by argument. He had no heroes, he was merely one of the great swordsmen of French journalism, honest in his way but concerned with the passion for attack and the thirst of self-expression. Stead was a little like him in his quick, restless, tangential mind, but Stead's style was mere prunes and prisms compared with Rochefort's waring, flaming speech, and the pen which pricked the bubble of the Second Empire very nearly brought down the Parliamentary Republic.

BY THE WAYSIDE

ROBERT ROSS

I find it hard to believe in Robert Ross's death. Within a few hours of it he was, as always, the admiration and delight of his friends; nor can one feel that death had aught to do with one who was the spirit of life and of the joy of living. His gifts were for all. His wit and charm penetrated every company. His wide knowledge, his wonderful memory, his sense of the beauty and refinement of existence, were given to every mind that could understand them. But what he really gave was himself. He gave to the good and the bad, to the thankless no less than to the kind and the grateful, to the inexperienced and the weak. The young poet could have his judgment and feeling for the music of words; the artist his practical sense, no less than his delicate appreciation of colour and form; his wit was a kind of gambol which stirred others to join the dance, though not with so graceful a movement as his. Never was a man's nature more delightfully made up, or more finely communicative of its own happiness. He was fifty years old. I never sat at meat with him but I thought him the youngest of the company.

*

To the finer mediæval mind the world seemed cruel, but not unintelligible; to the modern it seems both cruel and unintelligible.

*

Ideas are inexpressible. When we try to express them they become fallacies or part-truths. As writers get older they perceive this, and begin to qualify. But qualification is endless.

*

ALDEBURGH,[1]
Whitsuntide, 1897.

Sunlit and laughter-lit our days have sped,
And now, dear Clodd, you crave a farewell ditty,
Before we rattle back, with eyes averse,
To that infernal city.

[1] At the great symposia in the little house at Aldeburgh within the hiss of the North Sea he was a frequent participant, and his name is carved on the Arthurian table that stands in the hall.—H.J.M.

But long the muse has fled, and left my heart
Bare as these sands, a dry and dusty particle –
My pen a spoon for stirring light confections
Of frothy leading article.

Compact of hero,[1] scholar,[2] artist,[3] editor,[4]
This learnèd, but not grimly austere, party
Has stripped the 'duds' off he and she divinities
From Siva to Astarte.

And now dismayed, it seeks a guardian saint
To stay the wrath of each offended god,
And calls on thee, kind host, best son of Earth,
Warm-hearted Clodd.

*

DR. JESSOPP

I see that the tributes to Dr. Jessopp make little mention of his gifts as a schoolmaster. Yet they were remarkable, though he never had a 'great' school in which to exercise them. His physical qualifications were pre-eminent. He was extremely handsome, of a stature and mien to impress schoolboys as Arnold impressed Rugby; and for beauty and sonority his voice equalled, I think, Gladstone's. I shall never forget his reading of the collect 'Lighten our darkness', with which he used to close the afternoon school, so that to an imaginative boy the growing gloom of a winter's day seemed shot through with spiritual light. He used this great natural endowment with special effect in the teaching of the classics, for he insisted on impressing us with the music of Homeric and Horatian verse before he allowed us to worry out its sense. Jessopp treated all literature as one, and led us naturally from Homer and Æschylus to Shakespeare and Milton, while he would patiently take our stilted schoolboy English to pieces and mould it before our eyes into the easy, idiomatic style which was his own. A

[1] Sir George Scott Robertson.
[2] Grant Allen.
[3] William Simpson.
[4] Clement Shorter.

tender heart lay beneath his Olympian majesty of bearing, and made him a true parent to many a fledgling mind.

*

We spend years in undoing with our second thoughts the good our first thoughts would have done us in as many seconds.

*

We are always building tabernacles, and mistaking them for temples. But the wind soon blows them away.

*

DISRAELI

As a critic, Disraeli had three advantages over his contemporaries. He was a man of genius; he had a great literary gift; and he was essentially a foreigner – a bright-eyed, cool-headed and cold-hearted, inquisitive, rather fawning stranger – seeing England from without rather than from within. He was not a very sincere man. He loved phrase-making more than truth, and he could invent history to please himself and his friends. But he could see all round the queer, self-satisfied English world of his time, with the splendour of its palaces, and the misery of its mines and mills, its cruelties and philanthropies, its meanness and complacency.

He was a great man? Yes; if ambition be all, and we dissociate moral energy and the creative faculty from the government of the world. Life was to Disraeli a form of decorative art; and as Westminster Abbey appealed only to his scenic sense, so religion was merely an accent of its ceremonial rhythm. Thus he enjoyed his Church patronage, as he enjoyed all power, and a Bishop was his first move in the losing game of the Election of 1868. Fixing a half-abstracted and wholly foreign gaze on the English stage which he finally dominated, he described its movement as it has never been described before or since. Here he overstepped not only his great rival – for Gladstone, as he truly said, could not write literature – but all his contemporaries. For the actor withdrew within himself; the artist mind was thrown in rich Titian-like colouring on to

the scene in which he seemed to be playing an almost conventional part.

*

Whoever wrote more unreadable stuff than Voltaire, or said things more perfectly?

*

Much of Carlyle's writing is mere swearing-at-large; but the oath has a sound like Thor's hammer.

*

Samuel Butler has raised a great prejudice against the stern parent, yet, save for him, Butler might have died a curate.

*

BYRON AND THE ABBEY

It is a pity that the controversy on Byron's admission to the Abbey could not have closed with the poet's commentary on the event, written, for preference, in the *Don Juan* style and stanza. I suppose the Dean's conclusion will be held to be sufficient, even if his reasons seem to border on the Pecksniffian. Byron's weaknesses were not precisely of the kind which find harbour in Deaneries and Closes, and, with all deference be it said, the present Dean of Westminster is no Stanley, able to frame a large and liberal conception of his duty as warden of the great Church. For, after all, the Abbey is more than a parsons' freehold. It is the shrine of English greatness, and if Byron was not great, more than three generations of European thinkers, poets, and men of letters, to say nothing of hundreds of thousands of humble admirers, have thought or felt about him in vain. To be sure, a sort of literary criticism, which to me is not criticism at all, has done something to diminish his glory, and a more fastidious taste in the character of art forms has done something more. In my youth things were different, and in a way freer and larger. My mother was a Puritan of the Puritans; yet she loved Byron, and I don't recall that she ever discouraged me from reading him; while a still more impassioned Byronian of my youth was the most religious-minded man I ever knew. Byron was thought

of as Goethe thought of him – as a great human force, destructive and awakening, as well as a great foe of things as they were in the blessed reign of George III. These ideas have given place to others, but it is still surprising that the country should let the keys of our Abbey hang to a priest's girdle. The Abbey belongs to the English nation, not to the Dean and Chapter, and the question of the kind of Englishman who should lie there, or whose qualities and services ought to be commemorated there, should be decided by national trustees. And these trustees should have a lay as well as a clerical element. For years this reform has been proposed,[1] and silently dropped. But one day it will be urged with irresistible force.

*

Most of our younger writers lack feeling and the power of composition. Why? Is it not because they have no general conception of the world, and therefore no love for it?

*

The artist is always trying to reveal the kind of man he is, and the average man to conceal it. Both fail.

*

EDMUND BLUNDEN[2]

There are qualities for which the author of *The Shepherd* and of such beautiful short poems as *Almswomen* has been hailed as the new Keats, and I have even heard him described as a greater and more sincere and intimate Goldsmith. It is cer-

[1] H. W. M. was for many years much interested in this subject. He wrote, in the *Contemporary* for September, 1891, an article called 'The Nationalization of Cathedrals', which was, I believe, largely inspired by Dr. Jessopp, who gave him much of the material.

[2] The *Nation* was the first weekly journal to publish a poem by my dear friend and, once established, the connection was never broken. He was also a regular prose contributor. This notice of him, from the *Christian Science Monitor*, was written on the occasion of his appointment to the chair of English Literature at Tokyo University in the spring of last year.—H.J.M.

tain that none of his younger contemporaries approach him in truth of phrasing, in delicacy of feeling for the English country-side and its inhabitants, and at times for a sustained and almost impeccable beauty of line. He owes something to an earlier poet of rural England, the unhappy and, till later years, the almost buried poet, John Clare. But Mr. Blunden has a unity of vision which Clare lacked, and even his detail is more suggestive and truly poetic. In these days of much advertisement Mr. Blunden's modest, even diffident, bearing has stood a little in the way of his earlier recognition. But he is fast arriving at a recognized place in English poetry, to attain eventually, it may be, a place among its classics.

*

TO MY MYRTLE[1]

My lovely myrtle, that the frost burnt sore,
  Searing her shining dress, now pranks to the sun
A thousand little golden crests and more;
  Decked like to Botticelli's Spring's my glorious one.
So blooms her winter-wounded heart; and soon
  With milk-white stars she'll shine; and then she'll preen
Her young arraying for her bridal noon,
  And o'er the garden bend, its pearl-crowned queen.

*

PARIS DURING THE PEACE CONFERENCE[2]

Well, I've seen the President, and had a long conversation with him. I half expected and half did not expect what I found. He is not, I think, the vain man he is here supposed to be. His manners are charming, refined and simple, his ideas large: but – Here he is in a strange and a hostile world; infinitely complicated and only to be conquered or even

[1] The myrtle grew and grows against the wall of his cottage near Thame, where he spent so many heroic hours campaigning against the weeds. It is *un veritable nid* (see page 360), and is surrounded by almost the dismalest country in England. But he never minded that. The weeds, the weeds!—H.J.M.

[2] From a private letter.

managed by slow advances. I am afraid he has grown out of patience of it, and that there will not be an understanding or a successful issue. There has been trouble, I believe, not at present reported on your side. I'll tell you about it when I see you. In brief, I don't believe the League of Nations is being built up in the right way. And the French Nationalist attacks on the President have affected him. He was very kind, and finished up with a kind of *feu de joie* of stories. I wish he were better served.

Paris is very amusing in its hard way. I've just had a sparkling lunch, in which, for the honour of old England, I did my best and said the worst things that came into my head. I'm always indeed rather too happy in Paris. It satisfies one's *humour*; and sometimes one's taste.

I have a jolly little flat, *un veritable nid*, near the two hotels, Astoria and Majestic, stuffed with English prigs and dons. They have a rather frisky dance on Saturday nights, to show that in Paris they can do as Paris doesn't.

But there's a black cloud over all. The world doesn't move as these people are trying to make it go. France is almost too quiet: but the present state of prices, the total neglect of the opinions and needs of the people, the tone of the Press — disturb me. The French are the cleverest people in Europe: but they are also the narrowest. And they simply won't look at the broad view.

*

A PARABLE IN DOGGEREL

Where the vintage was gathered, I never could tell:
Some say on the slopes of the wooded Moselle,
While others averred that the marvellous *clos*
Was first kissed by the sun on a plain of Bordeaux;
Others swore it was golden, and grew by the Rhine,
But all vowed its bouquet and colour divine.
Said the Lord of the vineyard: 'This fountain of bliss
Shall be stored like the kingliest wine that it is.
So build me a tun of magnificent girth,
To hold, for its ripening, the treasure of earth'.

So there flocked to the palace from East and from West,
Of the makers of wine-casks the sagest and best;
A band of old tinkers from hoary Vienna,
With a foreman supplied by the Prince of Gehenna;
From Paris, from Pete's town, from London and Berlin,
Came workers in wood as crafty as Merlin.
And they hammered and sawed and fitted and faced it,
And midway of the mightiest cellarage placed it.

Then in trooped the varlets by thousands and poured
In the tun's vasty belly the draught of the Lord;
And lo! the stream rushed to the floor and the sod,
Till it looked more like blood than the gift of the god.
And the Fool [1] shook his bauble, and shouted: 'Why, rot 'em,
The staves are all burst and the thing's got no bottom!
Would you save the world's wine, then awake from your stupor;
Away with these bunglers, and send for the Cooper!'

Then a Presence stepped in; and straight to men's seeming,
The light in the hall changed from winking to beaming.
What he looked like? A touch of the sober-side Quaker,
The bright glance of Shelley – or any song-maker –
The brow of old Kant, the grin of Voltaire,
The bagman's [2] brisk port and his common-sense air,
And as Laughter's the nestling, first-born, of Love's meinie
A grim smile from Swift and a gay one from Heine;
Last, a medicine for souls, surpassing Hippocrates',
In a gleam from the wrinkled goat-visage of Socrates.

And then, wrought to something that drew from the Whole,
New bread for man's body, new drink for his soul,
A ray from the Vision; a hint of the Plan –
The face of the thorn-crown'd, the crucified, Man.

And a voice like a breath from the wings of a Dove,
'Would you drink of earth's wine, you must store it in Love'.

*

[1] See Tolstoy's *Ivan the Fool.* [2] Cobden

Modern England is too strong to be destroyed by her war, and too coarse to be redeemed by her religion; she stands erect, without fear, but also without ideas, so that for all her courage and achievement she is a danger to herself and others.

*

A delicate nature may veil itself beneath a Rabelaisian humour, and a gross one behind scrupulous purity of speech.

*

Resist the devil; and he returns with seven apparent angels to help him.

*

The modern Pharisee would never have crucified Jesus; he would merely have talked like him.

*

THE PIGEONS[1]

'I saw the slate-blue birds with fluttered wings,
Alight and feed from a kind proffer'd hand;
And pondered: "If these restless wingèd things
Can thus with man, their foe, be reconciled,
So when man's heart to man deliverance brings,
He will become as trustful as a child".'

*

The nature that would escape suffering must cease feeding on itself.

*

What have I lived for? For God? No. For others? No. For ideas? A little. But more for amusement.

*

It is useful now and then to say frankly to yourself, 'I am unhappy', for then cheerfulness begins at once to break in.

[1] From the letters: 'Here's a bad bit of verse which came into my head as I saw a man feeding pigeons in front of the National Gallery'.—H.J.M.

Boredom is a *via dolorosa*, but it seems to lead a few people to heaven.

*

The Happy Land – the Land of Somewhere Else.

*

ALMA GENETRIX

The Mother, awaking,
Seeks lives for her love;
New buddings, new matings,
New notes for the dove.

And, oh, in this bosom
Thrills quick to her art
The trembling, expanding
New world of my heart.

*

JANET ACHURCH

The death of Janet Achurch makes many of us look back to the days when we first saw her as Nora in the *Doll's House*. She had played a good deal before, and her charm of presence and personality was obvious enough. Then she burst out – there is no other word for it – as Nora. There were greater artists than she on the stage, but I cannot imagine any of her contemporaries coming to such a sudden and perfect flower of expression. Her girlish beauty of look, voice, and carriage was wonderful enough; to see her, then, was almost to fall in love with her. The art of her impersonation was to exhibit these gifts of Nature, and then to let us see the shadow of experience falling on that gay, wild creature, and darkening the wings of her youth and enjoyment, until you forgot all about the artist's look, and thought only of the soul and mind whose birth she was exhibiting. The most brilliant passage of her playing was the dancing of the tarantella; the most truly exciting, the following talk with her husband. For many play-

goers Janet Achurch's 'Nora' was the beginning of their interest in the woman's movement and their understanding of it. It was a delightful work of imagination and conception, but it was also a powerful, though quite unconscious, piece of propagandism.

*

Rich men; to the poor come I.
Vain ones; I've no vanity:
Pride depart; for I must seek
Lovers only in the meek.

Humble trust, I am thy friend,
Simple thought, to thee I lend
Rays from Truth, whose lantern dim
Veilèd is by Seraphim.

Here's a body for your blows,
And a breast for your repose;
On my back a Cross I bear;
Hasten, hasten: stretch me there![1]

*

What a world! If I were J.C., I should be ashamed to be the Son of such a Father!

*

DR. PERCIVAL

There have been Liberal Bishops before Dr. Percival's time and after it, but he was the only Prelate I can recall who was a Liberal before he was a Bishop. Thus whenever I saw him in the House of Lords I used to watch his fine face, with its look of benevolent obstinacy, with peculiar interest, chiefly because of the anxiety its owner obviously inspired in his right reverend

[1] From one of the private letters, and apparently occasioned by a success in his effort for the Vienna Relief Fund: He writes: 'Splendid about the Fund. I doubt a great subscription, but the starting of a movement with some humanity behind it – even its affectation – does something to redeem the infamy of our policy and to wash a grain or so from the filth of our self-righteousness'.—H.J.M.

brethren in God. The Primate, I am sure, endured agonies on his account. Taking the Bench of Bishops as a whole, it was usually a case of Percival against their world, for only he seemed to speak and vote as if the common race of men, their thoughts and desires, had a first call on his interests. He was a very moderate man; but he simply could not accommodate his mind either to the inveterate Toryism of most of the Bishops, or the sloppy Erastianism of the rest. He was not an extremely gifted speaker; his quality was simplicity, downrightness, and, above all, the exasperating quality of thinking *with* rather than for the mass of human beings. Of course, he never got beyond his bishopric,[1] though he would have made an admirable Archbishop of York. Some tried to induce the then Prime Minister to seat him in the northern Archbishopric. They failed; though Percival was a good administrator, and, albeit advanced in years, quite fit for the work. But I suppose it was all for the best. The Church of England might have died of the shock.

*

'Not as a Flame will he come,
But with the Evening wind;
And in the blessedness of the mind
Thus will he come.

'Not in the Dearth will he come;
But with children fed,
And the soul given its bread,
Thus will he come.

'Not in the clouds will he come,
But in the clear deeps,
Where all but thought sleeps,
Thus will he come.

'Not in Thunder will he come,
But in a voice so still,
As to break the world's will –
Thus will he come.'

[1] Of Hereford.

As soon as democracy produces enough honest minds at the top, it will begin to be great.

*

H. M. HYNDMAN

Mr. Hyndman, who has just died,[1] was the father of Socialism as my generation knew it. He was neither its philosopher nor its political agent. He simply gave it the immense advertisement of his picturesque self, his literary genius, and his tremendous self-confidence. With him the Revolution was always at hand; and if it did not happen yesterday to-morrow's red dawn was always sure. If I enumerated the number of times that Mr. Hyndman assured me that nothing could now save the *bourgeois* and that I had better hurry up and join the last files of the Red Army's march, I should only awake the smile of disbelief. At last it came – as far away as Petrograd; and instantly the good old Tory that Mr. Hyndman was rallied to the smiting of Lenin and Trotsky. There never was a sincerer person; or one in whom the theoretical enthusiast lived more absolutely apart from the primitive and real man. He was almost a great writer, and as a speaker had few equals in England, if the classical model were all. His appearance was Jovian. And for all his tongue of fire and sometimes of gall, he had a most tender and constant heart.

*

Revolutions are never dull, because interesting people are always engaged in them. Who would willingly miss Danton or Robespierre from history? Or Lenin? Even if we disapprove them, we learn from them what the nature of man is, and its power and range.

*

When a famous American wit heard that Poland was to be a Republic with Paderewski as its President, he replied: 'Then I am afraid it will be only a *pianissimo* one'.

[1] November 26, 1921.

A friend asked one of the leaders of Hungarian Communism whether there had been a great deal of corruption in its rule. 'The first Communist was crucified between two thieves', was the smiling reply.

*

Sunt lachrymæ. Read, those of you who have known sorrow, or on whom Nature has bestowed the doubtful gift of a sympathetic heart, the tale of the sufferings of Leo Tolstoy and his wife, as told (in part) in the Countess's brief *Autobiography*, now translated into English by Mr. Woolf and Mr. Koteliansky, and published by the Hogarth Press. The autobiography is a sad affair, poorly written, and apparently extorted from the countess by a pertinacious publisher. But it is a tale of the heart. Read it with Tolstoy's last letters, describing the tortures he endured during his last days at Yasnaya Polyana at the hands of this loving woman. I know nothing in literature save Ibsen's *Brand* (which is the life-story of one great man miraculously imaged on the brain of another) quite so affecting. Who shall distribute blame between the woman who could not change and the man who could not help changing, between the woman to whom her world and her man were all, and the man who could see only the vision of the spiritual life always eluding him when he tried to make contact between it and the claims of his physical, social existence? I say 'tried', but Tolstoy did not really try; he let his mind and soul flow on as they listed. Eternal problem; undeviating failure! And what a tremendous staging of the drama!

*

If God exists, all life must be a representation of Him. But the actors see neither the beginning of the play nor its end, nor its meaning; they all, even the most fortunate, are cast for unsuccessful parts and at best they only now and then hear the Prompter's voice.

*

It is wise to take the heaviest burden and expect the lightest reward.

Forbear to ascribe to yourself a single virtue; before the night falls the robe of your righteousness may be torn away.

*

'Come faster, death; and unimprison me
From this spirit-starving thing I call my body;
And if my tremulous soul's light wake again,
Give it an airier, vaster habitation
Than this gross battle-ground of lusts and fears.'

*

It is the Sinners who elect the Saints, for what Saint would ever admit that he was one?

*

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